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MAAT,

THE MORAL IDEAL IN ANCIENT EGYPT:

A STUDY IN CLASSICAL AFRICAN ETHICS"

VOLUME I

by

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To Maat which stands at the beginning, center and end of this project.

To Cheikh Anta Diop who walked this way before me and left a clear path.

To my family--immediate and extended, my organization Us and my friends.

To yesterday, today and tomorrow and its meaning to our people.

To our rich, varied and most ancient heritage in Kemet and all of Africa, and the paradigms it poses of moral grounding and human flourishing.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

AEL	Lichtheim, Miriam. Ancient Egyptian Literature, 1975, 1976, 1980
ANET	Pritchard, James. (1955) Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
AO	Archiv für Orientforschung.
ASAÉ	Annales du Service des Antiquités de L'Egypte, Cairo.
B1	Papyrus Berlin 3023
BAR	Breasted, James. Ancient Records of Egypt, 1935
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo.
Cd'E	Chronique d'Egypte, Brussels.
CT	de Buck, A. The Egyptian Coffin Texts, 1935-1961.
ES	Epigraphic Survey
GM	Göttinger Miszellen, Göttinger.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society, Baltimore.
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center of Egypt.
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archeology, London.
JEOL	Jaarbericht es Oriente Lux.
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago.
KRI	Kitchen, K. Ramesside Inscriptions.
LÄ	Helck, W., E. Otto, W. Westendorf, Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Wiesbaden, 1972-1983.

LÄSt — *Leipziger Ägyptologische Studien*.

Les. — Sethe, Kurt, *Aegyptische Lesestücke*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

MDAIK — *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Institus Kairo*, Wiesbaden.

MIFAO — *Mémoires publiés par les Membres de l'Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*, Cairo.

OBO — *Orbis Biblicus Orientalis*

PT — Sethe, Kurt, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentextes*.

Rd'E — *Revue d'Égyptologie*, Paris.

TPPI — Clère, J.J. and J. Vandier, *Textes de la Première Période Intermédiaire et de la XIème Dynastie*, Bruxelles: Édition de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1982.

Urk. I — Sethe, Kurt, (1933) *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Urk. II — Sethe, Kurt, (1904) *Hieroglyphische Urkunden der Griechisch-Römischen zeit*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Urk. III — Schäfer, Heinrich, (1905) *Urkunden der Älteren Äthiopenkönige I*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Urk. IV — Sethe, Kurt (ed.) (1961) *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

Urk. VI — Schott, Siegfried (ed.), (1929) *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Urk. VIII — Sethe, Kurt (ed.) (1957) *Thebanische Tempelinschriften aus Greichish-Rö mischer zeit*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

Wb — Erman, A. and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*.

ZÄS — *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a critical examination of Maat, the moral ideal in ancient Egypt. It seeks to present Maat in the language of modern moral discourse while at the same time preserving and building on its distinctiveness as a moral ideal capable of inspiring and sustaining ethical philosophic reflection. The effort here is one of both interpretation and transmission of an ethical tradition, a project in which tradition is seen not simply as a precondition and process in which one comes, but also as an ongoing product of one's efforts to understand it. Locating himself within the tradition, the author seeks to test the conceptual elasticity of its major categories and contentions and to establish its capacity for critical moral discourse.

Maat has essentially been a subject of Egyptology; this dissertation engages it as a subject of ethics from an Afrocentric standpoint. To do this, it critically examines the major moral texts of the Maatian tradition to establish both the contours and core conceptions of the Maatian ideal. The texts examined and employed as central Maatian texts are the Sebait, the Declarations of Virtues, the Declarations of Innocence and the Book of Khun-Anup. The work is divided into four basic areas of philosophic reflection: Maatian

theology, ontology, anthropology and social practice. the discussion of social practice is framed in categories of worthiness before God (*im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr*), worthiness before others (*im3ḫ ḫr kywy*); and worthiness before nature (*im3ḫ ḫr wnnt*). The dissertation concludes that the ancient tradition of Maat is indeed a rich resource for philosophic reflection and modern moral discourse.

PREFACE

The conceptualization and pursuit of this project have their origin in three basic sources which interlock and mutually reinforce one another, i.e., my intellectual and practical work as an Africana Studies scholar, as an ethicist and as a Seba Maat, a moral teacher, of the recovered tradition of Maatian (ancient Egyptian) ethics. First, this particular project is a part of an ongoing and larger project of Africana Studies, a kind of intellectual archaeology directed toward recovering and reconstructing classical African cultures as sources of possible paradigms for enriching and expanding modern African intellectual discourse and culture. And by extension, it becomes and is offered as a contribution to a truly multicultural discourse in academia, using my own ethical tradition and culture as grounding and the fundamental point of intellectual departure.

Related to this thrust is also an interest in enriching and expanding the discipline of Africana Studies with critical ethical discourse from both classical and modern

sources in African culture--Continental and Diasporan. This responds not only to an internally generated development thrust, but also to one of the most important recent developments in academia, viz., the addition of an ethical emphasis to standard discipline discourse in many traditional fields. Thus, one sees new stress on business ethics, political ethics, biomedical ethics, computer ethics, archaeological ethics, teaching ethics, etc., in addition to the regular treatment of ethics in religion and philosophy. African culture--Continental and Diasporan--has an ancient, rich and varied legacy in ethical discourse, and Africana Studies (Black Studies) can only be enhanced by the structural inclusion of ethics in the discipline. Not only are the oldest ethical texts located in African culture, but one of the most important contributions of Africans to U.S. society is their playing a vanguard role in setting its social ethical agenda and providing it with a significant discourse and practice in the interest of social justice. This project, then, becomes a contribution to intellectualizing this ancient and ongoing legacy and posing it as an important option in ethical discourse and practice.

Thirdly, recent discussion on the value of the recovery of tradition by Robert Bellah, Alasdair MacIntyre, William Sullivan and others reaffirms a similar emphasis by intellectuals and activists in the African American community, viz., Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hamer, W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G.

Woodson, Mary M. Bethune, et al. Also, such a stress on tradition is central to Maatian ethics and thus raises the question, In what ways do these African and European discourses differ from and resemble each other in their stress on tradition?

Fourthly, given Maatian ethics' stress on virtue, I find significant the renewed interest in European classical virtue theory as well as in responsibility ethics as an alternative to and/or enrichment of the dominant utilitarian and deontological modes of doing ethics. Here, too, I am interested in similarities and dissimilarities in the African and European models. Certainly, I realize that given the inclusiveness, complexity and diversity of each group of traditions--African and European--one will find similarities as well as differences, however cast in their culturally specific forms.

Finally, I have undertaken this project as a Seba Maat, a moral teacher, of the recovered ethical tradition of Maat. As a Seba, in the Maatian tradition, I am interested and involved in the intellectual and practical project of concept generation, and the development of new modes of analysis of Maatian texts, in the utility and disutility of various analytical approaches to Maatian ethics and in the development of canonical, critical and general literature essential to the definition and development of the tradition itself. I, thus, write from a definite stance as does a

Yoruba, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu and other adherents within their own ethical traditions. The dissertation is conceived and pursued, then, as both a clarification process for me through the critical examination of my own tradition and an invitation to other scholars and adherents to engage in an ongoing and mutually beneficial dialogue around the hermeneutical reconstruction I offer.

Like all works of any value, the work owes its completion and thus due acknowledgment to many. So the list of those whom I have to thank is consciously long. First of all, I extend thanks to my dissertation committee, each of whom offered his own expertise in the pursuit of this project: To my chair, Dr. Henry Clark (normative issues); Dr. Jack Crossley (theology); Dr. William Williams (public policy) and Dr. Antonio Loprieno (Egyptology, UCLA) all of whose critiques, advice and creative challenge were indispensable. In this regard, a special thanks goes to Dr. Clark for his additional assistance in the completion of this project. He was indeed always the colleague and committee chair, supportive and intellectually challenging at the same time. Likewise, an added thanks goes to Dr. Loprieno for his collegiality and the mutual challenge posed by our different ways of thinking about Kemet and its culture and ethics.

A special, profound and continuous gratitude is always reserved for my friend, colleague and wife, Tiamoyo, whose support in conception, research, typing, proofreading, inspiration, and creative challenge as a fellow Seba, were and are indispensable in this and all other of my projects. Moreover, profound appreciation is extended to Seba Chimbuko and Sebati Limbiko Tembo for years of research, assistance and ongoing support.

Also, I extend thanks to my colleagues and students at the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies and at the Ancient Egyptian Temple of Maat (Kawaida), especially those who with me have become the first Seba in the recovered tradition of Maat: Seba Tulivu Jadi, Seba Tiamoyo Karenga, Seba Subira Kifano, Seba Chanzo Taalamu and Seba Chimbuko Tembo. It is they who since 1982 have joined with me in systematic and sustained study of the texts and the building of institutions in the ongoing project of *serudj*--to restore that which was damaged and destroyed, and raise up that which was in ruins, set right that which is wrong and replenish what is lacking, making it better and more beautiful than it was before, as the Maatian texts urge us.

Thanks goes also to other advocates and supporters of Us Organization, especially: Sebati Tukufu Kalongi, Zenith Kuumba, Mpinduzi Khuthaza, Sebati MHimili Kinamo, Sebati Robert Tambuzi, Sebati Wasifu Tangulifu, Malaika Tawasufi, Sebati Limbiko Tembo and Ujima Wema, who financed these

projects of recovery and restoration, provided volunteer work in research, proofreading, typing and other vital services, and planned and hosted various forums and conferences in ancient Egyptian Studies, including the founding conference of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) in 1984. A special thanks also goes to Kamau Tyehimba of Us, in Chicago, for his research assistance at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, and to Segun Shabaka, Maisha Ongoza and all the NAKO advocates for ongoing critical questions concerning the Maatian project.

I am also grateful to my colleagues and students in the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach. A special thanks, however, is due to my friends and colleagues whose collaboration and support on this and other projects in Africana Studies have been laudable and continuous: Professor Amen Rahh, Black Studies, California State University at Long Beach; Dr. Molefi Asante, African American Studies, Temple University, for his encouragement and collaboration in this and other intellectual projects for Africana Studies. Also, I extend thanks to Dr. Théophile Obenga, History and Egyptology, Université Marien Ngouabi, Brazzaville (Congo) for collegiality, collaboration and ongoing creative challenge to continue the work of Marehemu Cheikh Anta Diop whose work both informs and inspires our projects to rescue and reconstruct the rich and varied

legacy of classical African civilization and use it as a pradigm of and for human possibility and creativity.

Deserving thanks also for critical questions and comments are the students in my class "Ancient Egyptian Ethical Thought" in the Department of Black Studies at CSULB which I introduced and cross-listed with the Department of Comparative Literature and Classics. Also, thanks goes to my colleagues and professors in the Social Ethics program at USC, Dr. Henry Clark (normative issues), Dr. Bill May (policy and advisement), Dr. Don Miller (sociology), Dr. Jack Crossley (theology), Dr. Robert Ellwood (comparative religion), and Dr. Barry Seltzer (American and civic religion), for their ongoing creative challenge in comparative ethical philosophy and traditions.

Finally, gratitude is also expressed to the staff of The Wilbour Library at The Brooklyn Museum, especially to Mary Gow who was very helpful in my many visits there as well as in sending requested materials; and to Dr. Ronald J. Williams at the University of Toronto and Dr. Emily Teeter of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago for brief but valuable discussions on concepts and bibliography, and to all those who have year after year encouraged and challenged me with continuing ethical and spiritual questions to me in my capacity as Seba Maat of the Ancient Egyptian Temple of Maat (Kawaida).

I

THE MAATIAN IDEAL: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates and explains Maat as the fundamental concept in ancient Egyptian ethical thought and discusses its polysemic character and the conceptual elasticity this allows. It also offers a discussion of the literature on Maat which gives ground to the conceptualization of Maat as the essence of the moral ideal in Ancient Egypt. Finally, the chapter presents a conceptual framework for this study and sets forth its delimitations.

The essential thrust and purpose of this work, then, is to identify and explicate the moral ideal of ancient Egypt using the category of Maat and the Declarations of Innocence in the New Kingdom text, The Book of Coming Forth By Day, as the fundamental foci for analysis. By moral ideal I mean the definitive set of axiological assertions and assumptions which provide a paradigm of the ancient Egyptian conception of the moral or ethical. In other words, I am interested in

extracting from the available texts a reliable portrait and understanding of ancient Egypt's highest moral standards, its delineation of right and wrong, its definitive concepts of relational obligations and rules of conduct and other data which composed and informed the ancient Egyptian moral universe.

The focus on the moral ideal rather than the assumed moral practice of ancient Egypt is done for several reasons. First, this project is essentially a project of moral philosophy and the notion of ideal or paradigm serves this interest. Secondly, I hold that an accurate delineation of the moral ideal is fundamentally contributive to a critical understanding and discussion of the ancient Egyptians assumed practice. Thirdly, the ideal expressed in the literature is more readily accessible and saves one from problematic claims about practice which often are at best, only speculative and at worst prejudicial and reductive.

Also, the choice to focus on the moral ideal in Kemetic society aids in beginning to disentangle it from various reductive versions of it and to attempt to frame and understand it in its own terms. For a Seba (moral teacher) in the Maatian tradition, such an effort at authenticity is indispensable so that both developmental and critical works can be pursued from this process and its achievements. Finally, there is clearly an interest in the ideal as a point of departure and motivation for philosophical discourse in the

same sense the ideal motivates discourse in other religious and ethical traditions, for example the central idea of 'adl (justice) in Islam, tao in Confucianism, nirvana in Buddhism, dharma in Hinduism, tzedek in Judaism, agape in Christianity, etc. This is not to say that the various ideals cited for the various other religions have the same role as Maat in ancient Egyptian religion. On the contrary, these are posited rather to indicate how ideals central to a tradition can and do generate a discourse which both helps to explain and develop the intellectual foundations of the faith or tradition. Thus, the inquiry here is directed toward delineating the foundations of the Maatian moral ideal, testing its conceptual elasticity and its fruitfulness as an ethical option in our times. To conduct this inquiry, I wish to treat the moral ideal as a composite of two kinds of expressions of moral excellence and aspiration, i.e., Maat as an ideal theme and the Declarations of Innocence as an ideal norm or set of norms.

As A.S. Cua (1978:131ff) has observed, there are at least two basic ways to interpret moral ideals. The first is moral ideal as norm which is a standard of excellence that suggests "programmatic action." Moreover, it is a vision which serves "as a sketch . . .or blueprint . . .for concrete action." An ideal norm, Cua notes, may have a personal or social significance. On a personal level, it can "constitute a telos for [a] way of life." On the social

level, such "ideal norms are espoused as public and universal standards like justice or benevolence. And finally, an ideal norm is a standard of measurement "to assess actual conduct in the degree of approximation of the requirements set forth" in a particular moral vision. Some examples of this are the Buddhist Eight-Fold Path, the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments, the Hindu <u>Sadharana-dharmas</u> and the Maatian <u>Declarations of Innocence</u>.

A second way of interpreting a moral ideal is as a <u>theme</u>. "An ideal theme is not a typical conception or an archetype that establishes a pattern of behavior," Cua (1978:137) asserts. Rather, it is a "telos of a style of life" which "functions as a standard of inspiration, not by providing an articulate norm to be complied with, but by providing a <u>point of orientation</u>." It contrasts with an ideal norm which "functions as a standard of aspiration which issues in a sense of moral progress in one's efforts toward ideal achievement." For "with an ideal theme . . . moral progress is measured not in terms of compliance with a norm but rather in terms of the degree of comportment with the ideal focus." Some examples of ideal themes are the Confucian concept of <u>jen</u>, the Taoist concept of <u>tao</u>, the Dinka concept of <u>cieng</u>, the Christian concept of <u>agape</u>, the Zen concept of <u>satori</u>, the Hindu concept of <u>rta</u> or <u>dharma</u>, the Zulu concept of <u>ubuntu</u>, and the Kemetic concept of <u>Maat</u>.

Cua observes (1978:138) that an ideal theme is a _plurisignation_, a term borrowed from Philip Wheelwright (1968) to suggest a polysemic category and concept. Or as Cua states, it is "a notion that possesses as it were a power to suggest and stimulate different thoughts and interpretations." Because it is such an open-textured concept, "an ideal theme is a quasi-esthetic vision, a telos of a style of life to be developed with no a priori directive." Thus, he notes, Jesus leaves no definition of "love thy neighbor," Confucius no definition of _jen_, and Plato no definition of the Good. And likewise, the ancient Egyptians left no extensive definition of Maat, only statements of its centrality in the conception and practice of the Good and its meaning for the divine, social and natural. What is offered, therefore, is not so much a detailed document of things to do and not to do but a framework of possibility, a unity of focus, a point of orientation and reference for a diversity of actions leading to ideal achievement.

Within this conceptual framework which allows for two interpretations of moral ideals, Maat is clearly the ideal theme, and the _Declarations of Innocence_ are a collective set of ideal norms which _taken as a whole_ and considered as a single unit become an ideal norm or standard of conduct. Maat is the ground and point of orientation and the _Declarations of Innocence_ (DOI) evolved as an ideal norm by which the Maatian person set programmatic tasks which conformed to

the moral vision of Maat, the ideal theme or conceptual ideal. I will now turn to each of these expressions of the moral ideal and give a more extensive account of their meaning in the context and conception of Maatian ethics.

1.2 Maat: The Conceptual Ideal

The starting-point for any serious discussion of ancient Egyptian ethics is and must be the central concept of Maat. For as Vincent Tobin (1989:180) maintains, "the concept was for the Egyptian the basic foundation of his moral life." Maat, however, is highly polysemic and apt to strike one unfamiliar with the conceptual elasticity of such ancient and central terms as lacking categorical preciseness and thus, analytical utility. Actually, this conceptual elasticity which at first glance might seem problematic, on deeper inquiry proves promising due to what Morenz (1984:16) calls Maat's "rich treasury of meaning." For here one encounters in Maat what Cua (1978:138) defines as plurisignation which, as stated above, "possesses as it were the power to suggest and stimulate different thoughts and interpretations." Moreover, within the framework of a monistic ontology which, as Finnestad (1985; 1986, 1989b) notes, is central to the Kemetic worldview, the conceptual elasticity of Maat as a category of interrelated ethical, social, religious, political and/or natural order significance proves invaluable.

It is a generally accepted fact in Egyptological studies that Maat is a fundamental, pervasive and enduring element in ancient Egyptian civilization and an inclusive and defining cultural category (Teeter, 1990; Tobin, 1989; Morenz, 1984). Beginning with Wiedemann's (1887) and Bleeker's (1929) pioneering works, the study of Maat in its varied meanings has been taken up by many authors including the following: Moret (1940; 1988); Anthes (1952); Frankfort (1961:43-44, 53-88); Brunner, (1963); Morenz (1984:110-136); Tobin (1987; 1989); Hornung (1988); Assmann (1984a, 1984b, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Teeter, 1990; and Lichtheim, 1992). Major book-length works on Maat as a moral concept have been less extensive than general works on ancient Egyptian religion which include discussions of Maat rather than essays on Maat similar to Hornung's (1988) "Maat--Gerechtigkeit für alle? Zur altägyptischen Ethik." Thus, works such as Breasted's Dawn of Conscience (1934), Pirenne's (1965) La Religion et la Morale dans l'Égypte Antique, Assmann's Maat, l'Égypte pharonique et l'idée de justice sociale, (1989a) and Maat: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im alten Ägypten, (1990) and Lichtheim's Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies (1992) stand out as notable exceptions in the discourse on ancient Egyptian ethics.

The etymology of Maat, , suggests an evolution from a physical concept of straightness, evenness, levelness, correctness, as the wedged-shaped glyph suggests, to

a general concept of rightness, including the ontological and ethical sense of truth, justice, righteousness, order--in a word, the rightness of things (Wilson, 1948b:108; Morenz, 1984:13). A study of the literature on Maat, as well as other relevant texts, reveals immediately that Maat has many interrelated meanings, ethical and otherwise, and thus, has been defined in various ways depending on the emphasis any given author wished to make in a given text. Frankfort (1948a), Wilson (1956), and Tobin (1989) stress its definition as divine or cosmic order established at the time of creation. Rudolf Anthes (1952) calls attention to its function as a "pneuma-like" life-giving substance by which the divine powers (*nṯrw*) are nourished, and also stresses its role as an abstract principle, truth, especially in the Amarna Period. Teeter (1990), Shirun-Grumach (1985) and Wiedemann (1887) stress Maat's meaning as goddess (*nṯrt*), whereas Tobin (1989) also mentions its role as symbol of truth, justice and order.

Westendorf (1966:202-225) stresses Maat's directive thrust derived from the verb "*m3'*" which for him means "to give things a direction." Thus, he posits Maat as having two distinct meanings as guide and order. Given its central and comprehensive role in the Kemetic world view, Helck (1980:1110f) poses Maat as the foundation (Grundlage) of human life and the world and a system of rules whose goal and nature as order is defense against chaos in nature and

society. Bonnet (1952:430ff) agrees concerning Maat's centrality, defining it not only as the "Grundlage" of existence, but also as a guiding principle (Richtschnur) and goal (Ziel) of the divine world order. Moreover, he defines it as "rightness" and as a lawfulness of the social and natural order.

Bilolo (1988:7) posits Maat in essentially philosophical terms. He asserts that "the concept of Maat is a place of articulation of three ideals," namely:

> a) l'ideal de la connaissance, c'ést-à-dire l'amour de la science, l'aspiration vers la connaissance (*tmhj r rḫ*) et, plus précisement, de la connaissance de 'l'être-veritable', de 'ce qui est vrai, sûr, certain'; b) l'ideal moral de verité, de justice et de rectitude et; c) l'ideal métaphysique de l'amour et de la connaissance de l'Être (*Ḫpr*) qui est au 'commencement' (*š3'*) de tout étre (*wnnt nbt*).

He goes on to note that in addition to Maat as an epistemological (or philosophical) ideal, a moral ideal and a metaphysical ideal, it is, in a real sense, also "an ecological ideal, in as much as the ideal of Maat opposes all enterprises which tend to destroy the cosmic order, nature and thereby commits itself to the future (*ḫpr*) or destiny (*š3j*) of humanity." It is Maat as a moral ideal in the social and natural realms that finds place and relevance in this work. For such a definition speaks to the conception of Maat as an ethical concept and practice grounded in an established and interrelated order of rightness. And

this is the central focus and understanding pursued in this project.

Finally, Obenga (1990:158) affirms the rich complexity of the Maatian ideal. He states that "The notion of Maat is complex and rich." It expresses itself in four basic areas (1990:158, 166-167): (1) the universal domain in which Maat is "le Tout ordonné," the totality of ordered existence, and represents things in harmony and in place; (2) the political domain in which Maat is justice and in opposition to injustice; (3) the social domain in which the focus is on right relations and duty in the context of community and; (4) the personal domain in which following the rules and principles of Maat, "is to realize concretely the universal order in oneself; to live in harmony with the ordered whole" (1990:158). Again, then, the conception of Maat as an interrelated order of rightness is reaffirmed and points toward the fundamental understanding and approach of this work.

Thus, in spite of the various interpretations of Maat, Maat's meaning as an interrelated order of rightness, including the divine, natural and social, is repeatedly affirmed. As Moret (1940:1) observes, in studying "the doctrine of Maat" one is studying

> . . .ce qui doit être consideré, dans le monde physique et spirituel, comme chose correcte, vraie: Maâ. Le vrai, c'est le réel, le juste, c'est-á-dire ce qui s'ajuste à l'ordre de univers; les equivalences morales en sont: le bon, le beau, le bien (nefer) . . . (et) le contraire

> de maâ et de nefer c'est le mensonge ou l'erreur . . . , c'est-a-dire l'irréel, le disordre, l'incorrect, la violence, l'injustice, bref, le mal.

This basic concept of Maat as the foundation and order of the world lasts throughout ancient Egyptian history in a dynamic process of continuity and change.

The understanding of Maat as an interrelated order of rightness in the course of its development in Kemetic intellectual history evolves from the conception of Maat as a constitutive part of creation itself, both as a goddess or divine spirit and as a conceptual personification of order, rightness, truth, justice, etc. In *Coffin Text* 80, Maat is identified as Tefnut (moisture), the female element of the first act of creation which included also the male element, Shu (light and air). The text states that the Creator says, "Tefnut is my living daughter and she shall exist with her brother Shu. Life is his name, Maat is her name" (CT I:32). Maat here is right order, divinely established order and as such is "the Egyptian concept of the arrangement and relationship that underlies and governs all aspects of existence, somewhat akin to the western notion of natural law" (Allen, 1988:26). Moreover, "[i]t extends from the elements of nature . . .into the moral and social behavior of mankind." Maat as "order is the principle which makes the whole of existence possible." At the same time, it is a life-generating principle and force. Thus, it is written that Nun, the primeval waters, said to Atum, (the Creator)

"Kiss your daughter Maat. Put her to your nose that your heart may live" (CT I:35). Maat then is both a reality-constituting force and a life-giving force at the very moment of creation.

Maat, as a principle and force constitutive of creation itself, comes to mean, then, an order and rightness which permeates existence and gives life. Thus, Morenz (1984: 113) states, "Maat is right order in nature and society, as established by the act of creation and hence means according to context, what is right, what is correct, law, order, justice and truth." Anthes (1954:23) also stresses the centrality of Maat as a divinely constituted order. He observes that "[the] idea of Maat primarily means the divine order of the world, including the political, theological and social order of Egypt." The existence of such a divine order has interrelated ethical, ontological and anthropological implications, as we shall see in the sections on ontology, anthropology and social practice below. Chief among these ethical implications is the moral responsibility this places on humankind.

Given the divine character of this order, Anthes (1954: 23-24) observes, " . . .from the beginning the rightness of man, his being *m3'* depends upon the question whether or not he fits this order." Thus, he concludes, "this is a social question and therefore not answered by what he thinks of himself or by his own conscience directing him but by his

reputation with his king and fellow citizens." This is not to say the person had no need of personal conscience. On the contrary, it simply suggests that conscience (*ib* or *ḥ3ty*) is a relational concept and thus depends on both what is thought of one by one's moral community and what one thinks of oneself based in substantial part on this evaluation by significant others. Therefore, as argued below, Kemet evolves as a communitarian society, focused not on the individual but on relationships, reciprocal obligations and related rightful expectations (Gyekye, 1987: 155).

This need for "fitting into" or being in harmony with the created order, i.e., the divine, natural and social order as an integrated whole, is also noted by Frankfort. He (1961:70) states that "a man's success in life appears as proof of his frictionless integration in (this divine) order." Likewise, his opposition to it and his practice of isfet, i.e., wrongdoing, evil, disorder, etc., the opposite of Maat, insures his destruction. For isfet is "the abomination of God" and "that which is perennially defeated in the order of the universe" (Frankfort, 1961:75). Obenga (1990:158) reaffirms this interpretation stating that "the most successful, useful, proper (suitable) human conduct is cosmologically circumscribed . . . ." And, of course, this circumscription expresses itself in the demands and boundaries of the Maatian order, the order of rightness in its most inclusive meaning. It is, thus, the Maatian life that

is the truly successful and fruitful life and the isfetic life which invites destruction and failure.

It is in this meaning as natural and moral law and order that Maat has parallels with other foundational worldview principles in various other religious and ethical traditions such as _cieng_, in the Dinka tradition (Deng, 1972), _rta_ in the Hindu tradition (Singh, 1984), _dike_ in the Homeric Greek tradition (Tobin, 1987), and _tao_ in the Chinese tradition (Tu, 1985). However, none of these parallel concepts is as all-embracing in its conception and function as Maat is in the ancient Egyptian ethical tradition. In the Dinka tradition, _cieng_ is, at its core, a moral-order concept and principle which means, as a verb, "to live together, to look after, to order or put in order, etc. (Deng, 1972:13). And as a noun, "it means morals, behavior, habit, conduct, nature of, custom, rule, law, way of life and culture." Like Maat, _cieng_ means rightness, moral order, harmony, character, law, moral sensitivity, concern and care, and is a way of life. Moreover, "_cieng_ has the sanctity of a moral order . . .inherited from the ancestors who had in turn received it from God." Thus, violation of this order promises not only social disruption but a spiritual punishment. And "conversely, a distinguished adherence to the ideas of _cieng_ receives temporal and spiritual rewards." However, _cieng_ does not have the cosmic import that Maat has and therefore is not as all-embracing

a concept as Maat. For Maat, as noted above, is the foundation of the world order.

In the Hindu tradition, <u>rta</u> like Maat is the foundation of the universe. As Singh (1984:19) states, "the entire universe is conceived as founded on rta, sustained by rta." Moreover, "rta is the universal law that necessarily subjects everything to its determination and fashions a universe that is governed by a definitive law immanent in its working." <u>Rta</u> evolves into the concept of <u>dharma</u> and remains both moral and cosmic law. Murthy (1985:145) defines <u>dharma</u> in terms similar to Maat, i.e., as "righteousness, justice, duty." It is, he says, "the expression of the Vedic concept of cosmic moral order. It is the most important value in Hinduism and is the basis of both individual and social values." But <u>rta</u> differs from Maat in its justification of a caste system which ascribes different levels of human merit based, not on deed, but on biology. Maat, on the other hand, is not the foundation for the inequality of humans but the basis of their equality. Thus in the Four Good Deeds of the Creator, we read that Ra made all humans equal, and gave them equal right to and use of the bounties of nature (CT 1130).

As Tobin (1987:113-114) states, the Homeric Greek concept of <u>dike</u> parallels Maat "insofar as it functions as a regulating force of the natural order." But it differs from Maat in that it is a fatalistic, restrictive and "nega-

tive force, one that prevents change or development and holds the cosmos in a static situation." Dike also contrasts with Maat as a "positive moral force working to right wrongs and to maintain a moral order." Dike was originally amoral and developed later with essentially the role of punishment.

Tao, like Maat, is also both a moral and cosmic force and is closer to the concept and meaning of Maat than any of the other principles discussed above. It is both the way of Heaven and the way of earth in both a cosmic and moral sense. But it is unlike Maat in Maat's role as the shared essence of the universe as explained in Chapter V. To describe this substance the Chinese employ the concept of "chi" (Tu, 1985:36ff).

The key point of this discussion, then, is that the practice of Maat is conceived and carried out within the world view which links the divine, the natural and the social. These three domains are interrelated, interactive and mutually affective. And a Maatian person understands this and acts accordingly, as the history of the idea of Maat, which is presented below, demonstrates.

As Assmann (1990:54) contends, Maat is an "einheitstiftende Idee," a unity-creating idea, which unites both God, society, nature and universe. In a word, "Herrscher und Gott, Kultur und Natur, Gesellschaft und Kosmos, Gerechtigkeit und Weltordung sind in diesem Weltbild in der Tat ein und dasselbe." This evolves out of an ontology which poses

a unity of being and posits Maat as the fundamental ground for this unity. Ethically this has meaning in that it becomes a task of king and members of society to uphold this Maat-grounded world, which is essentially good, and to restore and recreate it constantly. It is in this context that Maat expresses itself as an ongoing ethical project, a project which is the central focus of this work.

1.3 Conceptual Assumptions of the Study

1.3.1 Stance and Tradition

Moral philosophy or moral analysis as an intellectual project begins with and is constantly informed by a definite stance or perspective (Harrison, 1985; Curran, 1982; Gustafason, 1968; and Sellers, 1966). In fact, Charles Curran (1982:38) has correctly argued that "the question of stance or perspective is the most fundamental and logically first consideration in moral theology" or ethics. Describing it another way, he states it is "an angle of vision which directs the entire enterprise of . . .ethics." Continuing, he posits that "the stance functions both methodologically and substantively," serving both "as a negative critique of other methodologies" and providing "a positive approach of its own." Clearly, the theoretical adequacy of any stance depends upon how well it delineates and develops the project under consideration. And it must not serve a priori as substitute or alternative for serious analysis. On the contrary, stance is simply the essential starting point for

philosophical ethics, and thus a critical and thorough analysis of each issue involved in a given project must be made. My stance is rooted in the Maatian ethical tradition and arises out of my commitment to the recovery of this ethical tradition as both an intellectual and practical project. Given this grounding in tradition, this project is informed by several fundamental considerations and assumptions.

The first assumption, then, is that one's tradition, which is at the core of one's stance, is what Alasdair MacIntyre (1981:139) calls the "moral starting point" for philosophical ethics and serves as the foundation on which one's theoretical and ethical edifice is raised. Tradition, then, is indispensable grounding for this project, and it is thus from within the renewed Maatian tradition that I conceive and pursue this project. However, it is important to add that this does not mean one's tradition is exempt from either internal or external criticism. On the contrary, one of MacIntyre's (1988) main points is that although an ethics may be bound to a given tradition and to the practices on which the tradition reflects, it still can be and must be critical. Thus, I recognize and am attentive to the ongoing tension between the demands of critical adequacy and ethical commitment within a tradition, and I pursue my analysis accordingly.

1.3.2 Difference from Egyptology

A second assumption is that this project is essentially different from the Egyptological enterprise. Thus, it is important to state at the outset that this work is not a work in Egyptology. On the contrary, it is a work whose essential thrust will of necessity offer alternatives to some common Egyptological understandings of ancient Egyptian ethics, their modes of articulation and some common positions held by Egyptologists which have grounded and shaped their assumptions.

The project differs from Egyptological studies in several ways. First, it is a project of moral philosophy and thus is pursued from a different angle of vision and presented with a different mode of articulation. It is designed as a philosophic reflection on what it meant and means now to practice Maat, using a language drawn from ethics and philosophy rather than Egyptology. Inherent in its conception and pursuit are both a challenge to the perception of Maat as an archaic notion incapable of providing a conceptual ethical framework and the considered assumption that Maat as a renewed ethical tradition has relevance as a participant in modern ethical discourse.

Secondly, the project is pursued from an African centered perspective rather than a Judeo-Christian centered or Eurocentric perspective which poses Egyptian religion as an underdeveloped "pagan" project, eventually overcome and

out distanced by the Judeo-Christian enterprise (Assmann, 1989a:141). Likewise, it does not accept the widespread preference for removing Egypt out of Africa and placing it in Western Asia in spite of geographical and cultural realities. And finally, this project differs from Egyptological studies in its thrust to present the ancient Egyptian moral ideal and to discuss it in its own terms as a valuable ethical tradition capable of engagement in modern moral discourse rather than as an essentially archaic, mythic or cultic project of little ethical value. It is, then, a reconstructive hermeneutical project as distinct from the deconstructive thrust which often marks the Egyptological enterprise. The purpose, then, is not to duplicate or fit within the Egyptological framework of ancient Egyptian studies with its stress on the cultic, mythical, magical and pagan. Rather it is to explore the possibilities of genuine philosophic reflection within the renewed Maatian tradition on issues central to moral philosophy.

1.3.3 The Open-Texture of Maatian Discourse

My philosophical approach, then, includes the assumption of an open-texture of Maatian ethical concepts and discourse. This essentially means that Maatian discourse contains a conceptual elasticity which enhances both its developmental possibilities and its capacity for modern ethical discourse. My task and aim, then, is to create and employ categories and concepts which are plausible and

useful in explicating the Maatian ideal and engaging in this discourse. This also means framing the discourse of an ancient tradition in terms conducive to modern ethical discourse. And it requires that I be as faithful as possible to the textual contentions and philosophical concepts of this ancient tradition while at the same time presenting Maatian ethical philosophy as a competent resource for understanding and dealing with contemporary ethical issues and concerns. It is a task and project not dissimilar to the tasks of other scholars such as those in Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, etc., who early in the history of their traditions began to translate the basic concepts of their traditions in a language and corpus of literature capable of addressing issues of their day. And, of course, the practice continues.

I obviously recognize there are alternative positions which challenge and oppose my assumptions, but I nevertheless assume sufficient grounds for my own and seek to demonstrate them in the process of my analysis. My intention, then, is to present an authorial perspective which, while faithful to the texts and ethical tradition of Maat, nevertheless attempts: 1) to offer an alternative way to understand ancient Egyptian ethical thought and practice; 2) to establish the value of this restored tradition as an ethical option in our time; and 3) to bring this interpretation

forward to engage it with contemporary ethical discourse and discussion.

1.3.4 Beyond the Eurocentric Approach

Given the above considerations, I assume an obvious need to go beyond the standard approach to ancient Egyptian religion and ethics in order to discover current moral meaning for the Maatian tradition. This standard approach, usually called Western, and inclusive of a Judeo-Christian emphasis, is defined by its assumption of cultural and religious superiority and its correlative assumption that ancient Egypt's religion is essentially a pagan project, undeveloped, prelogical, mythopoeic and without serious cultural depth or intellectual and ethical insight. Its culture is seen as principally a focus of archaeological study rather than a suitable subject for modern religious and ethical discourse. Gardiner (1914) makes a similar point in his brief and early article on ancient Egyptian ethics. This is not to deny the vast and valuable work Egyptologists have done in unearthing evidence of ancient Egyptian cultural life or to deny that several Egyptologists, as discussed below, recognize and seek to avoid such cultural and conceptual provincialism. What is challenged here then are the dismissive and distortive interpretations of ancient Egyptian culture, especially of ancient Egyptian religion and ethics.

Several authors within the Eurocentric tradition of ancient Egyptian studies have called attention to the conceptual limitations in which this Eurocentric approach operates (Frankfort, 1961; Hornung, 1982; Baines, 1984; Bleeker, 1967). The problem, however, is that whereas these scholars may criticize some among them for imposing European views and values on ancient Egyptian cultural reality, they themselves at times end up doing the same thing. For example, Frankfort (1961:18-20) calls for recognition of the difference of the ancient Egyptian worldview as a "multiplicity of approaches" rather than catering to Eurocentric sensibilities concerning what appears to them as inconsistencies. He invites us to recognize that ancient Egyptians in fact "display a meaningful inconsistency and not poverty but superabundance of imagination." And he concludes that "[i]f we see in them failures, proof of Egyptian inability to achieve intellectual synthesis, we simply misconstrue their purpose." But in spite of this support for intellectual tolerance and philosophical diversity here, it is Frankfort et al (1948a) at the Oriental Institute who, as Beatrice Goff (1979:19) reminds us, argued at length "the pre-logical mentality" of the ancient Egyptians.

Building on this, Goff (1979:19-20) identifies as an aspect of this "pre-logical mentality" a preference for the practical as distinct from the philosophical. "They were," she tells us, "essentially practical not philosophical

people." In fact, she continues, "when they considered what was really a philosophical question, such as the origin of the world and life as they knew it, it was because this question had a bearing on some problem they had to face." She concludes, stating that, "In any given period, then, their philosophical views were colored by their present situation, by their realization that many varied approaches might be helpful, and by a sense of freedom to use or overlook any ideas in older tradition." Such an appreciation for the unity of thought and practice and for knowledge in the service of social practice is hardly a reflection of a prelogical mind. In fact, to view philosophy as an essential mode of problem-solving in daily life, to develcp that thought respectful of context, and to use various approaches to problem-solving, looking both to the past and beyond it finds its modern parallel in the philosophy of praxis and is by no means a prelogical disadvantage (Sanchez-Vasquez, 1977). What one witnesses here, then, is evidence that when ancient Egyptian thought and practice exhibit a capacity for contribution to modern discourse, it is redefined so that it appears intellectually incapable of such a role. Thus, on one hand, Goff says that the ancient Egyptians were "practical" not "philosophical" and then she goes on to speak of their "philosophical views" only to dismiss them as prelogical.

Erik Hornung (1982:237-243) called attention to the fact that Egyptians had a logic and that it was simply different from European or "Western" logic. He calls this logic a "logic of complementarity" and a "many-valued logic" as opposed to the "either/or logic" of the Greeks. Of course, the category logic, like the category philosophy, is used here as a mode of thinking, not as the formal discipline which has its origins for Europe in Greece. John Baines (1984:37) criticizes the "patronizing" interpretations of ancient Egypt which end up "implying that Egyptians had less rationality than we do." Such question-begging contentions, he argues, should be dismissed, "for to imply that the human nature of the subjects of study is sc radically different from what we posit of ourselves is to deny the possibility of understanding them as human beings and is, in any case, not supported by other evidence." Baines, however, does not accept Hornung's concession of a logic to ancient Egypt. He concedes that there is a need to discover operative "rules" in ancient Egyptian conceptualization, but believes we should concentrate on developing a language to facilitate communication of ideas of an "atheoretical culture" to a "theoretical" one. This, of course, carries a suspicious resemblance to the old "prelogical-logical" dichotomy and again reflects the difficulty of abandoning foundational suppositions of the Eurocentric worldview.

Closely related to the idea of the prelogical ancient Egyptian mind is the stress on the mythic character of ancient Egyptian thought at the expense of the rational and real. Here again Frankfort et al (1948a) played an essential role in this overstress. Among other works which reaffirmed this are works by Eberhard Otto (1958), Jan Assmann (1977) and Vincent Tobin (1989). Tobin assures us that at the heart of ancient Egyptian religion is myth and cult. He (1989:6) notes the different logic ancient Egyptians employ and argues that "this freedom of Egyptian mythology to admit internal contradictions and to see them as compatible was the real strength of Egyptian religion." Reminding one of Hornung's contention, Tobin continues, saying, "[o]ne may in fact maintain that such internal contradictions were not in reality contradictory but rather complementary, there being no strict dogmatic principles to define either orthodoxy or heterodoxy." But in spite of the brief laudatory assertion, he (1989:7) lapses into the frequent Egyptological discourse on the mythopoeic and prelogic mind, interspersing it with concessions concerning not viewing the "myths as simple and naive stories designed and invented to satisfy the questions of somewhat childish ancient minds." In the final analysis, then, Tobin (1989: 83) reaffirms the standard Eurocentric position. In discussing the origins of Maat as principle and divine person, he contends that "one must . . .seriously question whether or not the Egyptian mentality was suffi-

ciently inclined to the philosophical as to be able to develop an abstract principle and then personify it at a later stage of development."

It is important to note here that I do not deny that there is substantial myth in ancient Egyptian religion even as there is in Judaism, Christianity and other religions. What I am posing as problematic is the tendency to over-stress myth and cult and deny ancient Egypt a genuine theology and ethics in the process. Thus, an important assumption which informs my stance is that beneath the mythological narrative lies a rational core of philosophical value. In a word, much of ancient Egyptian sacred writing is symbolic and hides a deeper meaning than the narratives and assertions might first suggest. The need, then, is to treat such narratives and propositions as is done with Jewish and Christian myths, i.e., as sources of philosophical insight and as points of departure for developmental discourse in religion and ethics.

1.3.5 Toward An African-Centered Approach

Another central assumption which informs my stance is that an African centered approach to the study and interpretation of ancient Egyptian culture offers a rich source of parallels and foci for comparative analysis which have been consistently overlooked to the detriment of critical and comprehensive analysis (Karenga, 1993:49-56). Such a stance obviously requires recognizing and respecting the geographi-

cal and cultural reality of Egypt in Africa, exploring the historical and cultural links with other African societies and ending the fictive identity of ancient Egypt as a West Asian country. However, in pursuit of this project, one must always be concerned with the limitation of comparison of cultures in such vastly different time periods and of assuming relationships which may be only parallels.

W.F. Petrie (1914) was one of the earliest Egyptologists to realize that Egypt was culturally a part of Africa and that other African cultures could be used to explicate and understand Egyptian culture. Frankfort (1948b) also contributed to this limited thrust in Egyptology in his classic study of divine kingship which demonstrated definitively the parallels of divine kingship and other practices in Egypt and other African societies while drawing a clear line of distinction between ancient Egyptian kingship and near Eastern forms of kingship. E.A. Wallis Budge (1960, 1961) also has pointed out both cultural similarities and parallel conceptions of theology and cosmology in Egypt and other African societies. Very often, however, he, as Hegel (1956: 198-219) did, attributes to Africa only what he considers the most "primitive" and "gross practices of ancient Egypt."

It is, however, Cheikh Anta Diop (1959, 1974, 1981a, 1981b, 1991) and his colleague Théophile Obenga (1973, 1975, 1990, 1992) who have done most to demonstrate the African

character of ancient Egyptian society and its affinity with other African societies and the relevance of this relationship in critical and comparative study. Within this framework, they have added an important counter to the early and erroneous yet insistent redefinition of Egypt as the product of an invading master race who overwhelmed and absorbed the early African inhabitants (Vandier, 1952; Emery, 1961).

A central Diopian (1981a:9-10) contention is that enduring attempts to deny the African character of ancient Egypt and recent claims that the racial or ethnic identity of the ancient Egyptians is irrelevant (Yurco, 1989), although it is relevant for the rest of Africa and the world, are both products of an ideological "scholarship" which grew out of an age of imperialist expansion and the resultant "need" for a justificatory ideology. This, he states, led to a concerted effort to discredit dominated peoples through the manipulation of science and the falsification of human history, a falsification which in Africa's case involved depriving it of its most important classical civilization. The thrust seemed to have been one of taking Egypt out of Africa, Africans out of Egypt and then Africa out of human history. Such a project and view reaffirmed Hegel's and others' Eurocentric claims that Africa was a non-historical continent and aided in justifying centuries of oppression and denial of African history and humanity (Mudimbe, 1988; Amin, 1989).

For Diop (1981:12), the rescue and reconstruction of ancient Egyptian history and culture as part of African history and culture is paramount. Such a recovery will give Kemet a central role in reconstructing African and human history and culture. He says, "For us, the return to Egypt in all fields is the necessary condition to achieve three basic goals: 1) "to reconcile African civilization with history;" 2) "to build a (new) body of modern human sciences;" and 3) "to renew African culture." Thus, he poses Kemet as a source of paradigms for study and development saying, "Egypt will play in a reconceived and renewed African culture the same role that the Greco-Roman ancient past plays in western culture." It is this conception and meaning of Kemet in both Diop's and Obenga's work which have informed and inspired the projects or recovery in ancient Egyptian studies by other African scholars on the Continent (Bilolo, 1986, 1988) and in the Diaspora (Karenga and Carruthers, 1986; Van Sertima, 1985, 1989; Asante, 1990; Karenga, 1984, 1989, 1990). Having accepted Diop's contention of Kemet's paradigmatic value for intellectual research and production, these scholars have introduced ancient Egyptian studies in the academy as a key area in the discipline of Black Studies and produced works which both study Kemetic society and pose it as a source of paradigms in their various fields (1993:49-56).

Certainly, there are arguments against Diop's views as the UNESCO sponsored symposium on "The Peopling of Africa and the Deciphering of the Meroitic Script" in Cairo, January 1974 demonstrated (Moktar, 1981:59ff). At this gathering of twenty distinguished Egyptologists from Africa, Europe and America (Canada), Diop and Obenga presented papers offering various forms of scientific evidence (linguistic, anthropological, iconographic, historical, physiological) of the African character of ancient Egypt. Although there was substantial disagreement with their position, the counter arguments were essentially undeveloped and not on the level of Diop's and Obenga's. In fact, in a summary of the symposium's conclusion, the editor notes this, saying that "[a]lthough the preparatory working paper sent out by UNESCO gave particulars of what was desired, not all participants had prepared communications comparable with the painstaking research contributions of Professors Cheikh Anta Diop and (Théophile) Obenga." Thus, he concludes, "[t]here was consequently a real lack of balance in the discussions" (Moktar, 1981:77).

However, it was felt that "nevertheless the discussions were constructive" in that they: 1) "brought home to almost all the participants the shortcomings of the methodological criteria which had hitherto been used in research;" 2) "drew attention to examples of new methodological approaches on the bases of which the questions before the symposium could

be studied in a more scientific manner," and; 3) "enabled specialists who had never previously had the opportunity of comparing and contrasting their points of view to discover other approaches to problems, other sources of information and other lines of research than those to which they were accustomed" [emphasis mine] (Moktar, 1981:77-78). Among the recommendations were: that human remains in museums throughout the world be re-examined and "a rapid study" of recently discovered remains be made; that Egyptian authorities "facilitate the necessary study of examinable vestiges of skin" and "set up a department specializing in physical anthropology;" that "specialists in comparative linguistics . . .establish all possible correlations" between ancient Egyptian and other African languages and; that there be conducted "an enquiry on paleo-African vestiges of Egyptian iconography and their historical significance."

There is, of course, then no doubt that ancient Egypt is a contested terrain because of its meaning to African and world civilization and to the dominant Eurocentric conception of world history and culture (Bernal, 1987, 1991). But the UNESCO symposium offered through its proceedings and recommendations an opportunity for the development of creative exchanges between established and alternative views as well as more productive research through alternative "approaches to problems, other sources of information and other lines of research."

Moreover, my assumption is also that even if Egypt were not African, its basic ethical teachings find many parallels in Africa, and that an enriched understanding of ancient Egyptian society can be gleaned by comparative analysis with other African societies. This, as will be demonstrated below, is evident in the communitarian character of Maatian ethics, the focus on self-knowledge, the concept of divine kingship, the stress on tradition, the emphasis on character and on practice, the concept of the continuity of being, respect for ancestors, the absence of concepts of ontological stain, i.e., sin, stress on self-mastery, etc., (Gyekye, 1987; Wright, 1984; Zahan, 1979; Mbiti, 1970). It would, then, certainly be of intellectual benefit to pursue such a comparative analysis and draw appropriate analogies between the ethical ideals of ancient Egypt and those of other African cultures. Both Diop and Obenga have made fruitful and instructive use of such a comparative approach. And it is clearly an important concern in this work.

1.3.6 The Unity and Diversity of Tradition

Another assumption central to the conceptual framework of this paper is that in spite of a tendency in Egyptology to divide ancient Egyptian religion and ethical tradition into royal and personal piety, or elite and popular expressions, there is a basic unity to the national tradition (Gunn, 1916; Breasted, 1934; Posener, 1969; Baines, 1987; Tobin, 1989). Although one can recognize elite and mass

approaches in all large-scale religions, this should not obscure the basic commonality of beliefs which define and give intellectual integrity to the religion and its ethics. Both Siegfried Morenz (1984) and Jan Assmann (1984b) have argued this point, positing religion in ancient Egypt as an essentially pervasive and ultimately unitary discourse and practice and suggesting that court-centered royal or elite forms can and do serve as framework for understanding the societal expression as a whole. Such a contention, however, must be qualified by the fact that there is a paucity of information on mass expressions of religion which are not attested to in abundance until the New Kingdom.

There is, of course, an alternative body of literature which could be used to argue for a diverse tradition. Focus of this argument tends to be on the elite as opposed to the masses and the royal as distinct from the popular. Both Georges Posener (1969) and Ronald Williams (1964) have made significant contributions to our understanding of literature, ethical and religious, as a possible medium for political "propaganda" in ancient Egypt. Posener posits the existence of "une propagande royale" which appears in the literature of ancient Egypt especially during the First Intermediate Period and takes root in the 12th Dynasty. However, this development, by the very intention he assigns to it, i.e., to stabilize the state, necessitates, as he himself asserts, a massive and extensive diffusion through-

out society. Thus, even though or if the literature is reflective of elite interest, it nevertheless becomes standard doctrine for society as a whole.

Moreover, it is important to note that the category "propaganda," as we use it today is hardly equatable with the state doctrine of ancient Egypt. Thus, Mysliwiec's (1985:9) characterization of royal presentations of Maat as a kind of political propaganda obscures more than reveals the complex interrelatedness of Kemetic state and religion and the pervasive character of religion itself in Kemetic society (Morenz, 1984: chapter 1; Teeter, 1990:271). Also, the concept of "Königsnovelle" introduced by Alfred Hermann (1938) and developed by Siegfried Hermann (1953-54) added another important dimension to understanding the relationship between politics and literature as well as the divine provenance of the king. But this does not discredit or diminish the real and sacred role the king played in ancient Egyptian society for the ancient Egyptian people. The divine ruler remained to the end of ancient Egyptian society an indispensable pillar in ancient Egyptian religious and ethical conceptions. And thus, royal texts are central to both the self-definition and self-understanding of Kemetic society.

In his article on "Practical Religion and Piety," John Baines (1987) criticizes the focus on the unitary understanding of ancient Egyptian religion and argues for focus

on the practical everyday religion of the masses. He (1987: 82) argues that the "ideological focus" on the royal ruler and "decorum" mask the "negative and untoward," ignoring the suffering of the masses. Moreover, he suggests that Old Kingdom literature as reflected in a treatise on the divine role of the royal ruler and translated by Assmann (1970:22; 1989b:58) and even Chapter 125 of the Book of Coming Forth By Day, reveal a negative, less optimistic picture of the life of the masses. Such a contention is in part based on his reading of the phrase "*sḥtp nṯrw*" as "propitiation of the gods in fear" in both texts. Actually, the passages are open to an alternative interpretation, and what Baines calls "propitiation" is more definitively rendered as "satisfaction" of the divine powers by both offerings and righteousness. As I argue below, the numerous autobiographies which appear in the next two chapters attest to this position.

The drawing of distinctions between elite and popular religion or royal, official, state religion and the religion of the masses obviously has its uses, but it, like overfocus on the unitary view of religion, carries within it certain limitations. It is a necessary focus for a total picture, but it is not always the most productive approach. After-all, one could, as some biblical scholars do, talk of Judaism and Christianity in terms of their rootedness in a political culture in which elite interests and ideology dominated and directed the course of their development. And

thus, one could argue that central concepts in Judaism like the "chosen people," "covenant," and "exodus" are essentially elite constructions to forge a national spirit and purpose, in a word, elite propaganda (Petrie, 1925; Redford, 1992:408ff).

Likewise, it is clearly arguable that Calvin's and Luther's versions of Christianity were essentially elite ideological constructions supportive of the state and status quo (Marcuse, 1983; Skinner, 1978). But neither of these positions reveals or removes the profound meaning these teachings have for the masses who accept them as their own. Thus, even if one of necessity concedes to the political use of religion by an elite, this does not at the same time imply or necessitate a position that the masses do not take these teachings as their own and act accordingly, as Teeter (1990) has shown in her important study of royal and popular approaches to Maat.

Secondly, Baines' decision to focus on suffering of the masses does not mean that this is the whole of their religious concerns. As Baines (1987:94) himself concedes, religion and religious practices are both diverse and complex. Therefore, his decision to interpret popular practice essentially in the "negative" rather than in the positive <u>and</u> negative, i.e., not see also the spiritually elevating and strengthening aspect of it, is obviously problematic, even though his attempt to correct an imbalance in existing Keme-

tic religious studies is understandable and supportable. For whether one refers to pre-Amarna personal piety (Posener, 1975; Stewart, 1960) or post-Amarna personal piety (Gunn, 1916; Baines, 1987), one has a variety of expressions and concerns. These include thanksgiving, confession of wrongdoing, praise, petition both for the end of affliction and for life, health and prosperity, and of course, spiritual joy at being blessed or, granted favor (*ḥswt*) or shown mercy (*ḥtpw*) as distinct from being a recipient of divine wrath (*b3w*) (Borghouts, 1982). An over-focus on affliction and misfortune, then, misses the very rich variousness of religious experience which Baines rightly cautions about in a too-rigid unitary view of religious expression and experience.

A related problem raised by Baines and Gunn is the question of whether or not a doctrinal shift in the so-called age of personal piety is just among poor people or the masses rather than throughout the entire society. As Griffiths (1988) notes, neither is precise about his line of demarcation between the masses and the elite. Thus Gunn (1916: 93) includes his concept of the religion of the poor "artisans taken from the lower ranks of the people, but rendered literate by the necessities of their occupation. . .." Are we to believe these people are poor, and if so in comparison to whom, the peasants? And are these Deir El Medinah texts representative of one "class" or "stratum" and

not poor people or the masses in general? As Griffiths (1988:101) points out, the workers at Medina "were royal workers and the higher strata were fairly well-off." Bierbrier (1982:83) makes a similar point about tomb-builders, noting that "their lot was far above that of the average peasant." And Janssen (1975) distinguishes at least three social strata among these royal workers. What one discovers at this point is that this shift of emphasis is more widespread than suggested by Baines or Gunn and includes Kemetic society as a whole.

Assmann (1984a:68ff) has made a strong case for the pervasiveness of this doctrinal shift. He (1989b:68ff) argues cogently that the shift in religious focus from what he calls the "classical conception of theopolitical unity" was indeed "not restricted to certain groups of monuments, e.g., ex-voto stelae or literary genres or social groups or classes." On the contrary, it "pervades the whole of Ramessid culture from royal to private monuments, from literature to art and religious institutions."

Breasted (1934:344-370) had also argued that this new religious sentiment and orientation pervaded the entire Ramessid age and thus designated it as the "age of personal piety." As he (1934:349) notes,

> . . .although rooted in the teachings of an exclusive few heretofore, these beliefs in an intimate and personal relationship between the worshipper and his god had now with the lapse of centuries and by slow and gradual process become widespread among the people.

Thus, "[a]n age of personal piety and inner aspiration to God now dawned among the masses." However, as Griffiths (1988:99) argues, the "revolutionary difference" that marks the confessional compositions of this period is not their stress on piety or relation with God, for that appears throughout Kemetic history. It is rather "the place they give to misfortunes suffered or evil deeds enacted." This, of course, is in contrast to the autobiographies which stress the positive and triumphant. But there is a similarity in that both the confessional compositions and the autobiographies show deference to the will of God. Thus, a standard autobiographical claim is that one has done Maat because it is "what God wills, wishes and loves (*mr*)" (Urk. I:57.14).

Although this seems to represent a confluence of concerns and focus, Baines still is reluctant to concede. He (1987:96) raises the concern that

> [i]f this literary derivation reflected accurately the extent of the phenomenon, it would be necessary to exclude other possible manifestations of piety from consideration and to assume that piety arose in the core elite and was a diversification of their religious orientation.

This concern is, of course, worthy of consideration, but does not prohibit recognition of the predominance of elite ideas and simultaneous idea generation and distinct practice of the masses. In a word, one would anticipate that the ruling ideas in any society are the ideas of the ruling group, but this does not preclude the development and main-

tenance of mass belief which is related to but different from ruling-class or ruling-group ideology and/or belief. What is required, then, is to view social processes as interactive and interrelated rather than isolated and totally distinct.

It is important to note that both Baines and Gunn show a measure of ambivalence toward the interactive possibilities in ancient Egyptian society which may have contributed to the development of this shift. Gunn (1916:93), in an attempt to explain both the origin and popularity of the development, states that

> [i]t may be the right view that we have here the evidence of a popular religious development of the Empire Period, <u>noticeable occasionally in the general literature of the time</u>, but especially appealing to the poor, who would see in the new ideas of a merciful and forgiving God a solace for their difficult existence. [emphasis mine]

However, Gunn goes on to suggest that

> [a]lternatively, it may be thought that we see here the folk-faith, always existent undisturbed by official or philosophic changes and speculations, becoming temporarily articulate in favorable circumstances, and affecting somewhat the views of the more educated.

This supplemental suggestion, of course, is reflective of the tendency to paint portraits of the ruling stratum of ancient Egypt in predominantly negative terms and to imply that the mythic image of the nameless biblical pharaoh is a historical reality. Like all ruling classes or strata, a defining aspect of the ancient Egyptian ruling class or

stratum is hierarchy and dominance, but as I argue below, a more critical picture reveals also a high level of commitment to ethical thought and behavior. Moreover, the ruling group itself is diverse and thus expresses a diversity of thought and behavior.

Baines (1987:17) also shows reservations about such a stark contrast, in spite of his severe criticism of the elite and his drawing of rigid lines of demarcation between elite and popular religious practices. Allowing for some interaction and unity of the elite and masses, he states that

> [t]he elite and the rest may be united by everyday religious practices that are not part of official ideology and are concerned with problems of comprehending, accepting and responding to the world, to loss, and to suffering that are treated in religious terms by very many cultures.

Likewise, the elite and the masses are "also united by the general absence of explicitly religious materials on the monuments" and the resultant need to satisfy one side of their religious need, the non-official, with "the rest of society."

The real challenge of critical analysis, then, is not to assume all virtues and inactivity for the masses and only vices and vicious conduct for the elite, or to separate the two forms of religious thought and practice with a stark line of demarcation. Rather, it is a challenge to give appropriate weight and space to each in the analysis, to suspend temporarily the unity between elite and popular

religious expression to achieve a more intimate and accurate view, but to return to the comprehensive perspective to establish interconnection and interaction which produce the phenomenon and process of ancient Egyptian religion as an integral whole.

While readily conceding the distinction between elite and popular practices and belief, this work focuses on the _ideal_ form in written documents and in the general moral _ideal_ in which they are both rooted and which in turn unifies them, i.e., Maat, especially as expressed in the ideal aspirations and values of the _Declarations of Innocence_ and _Declarations of Virtue_. For as Bleeker (1967:7) states,

> [i]t can be said without any exaggeration that Maat constitutes the fundamental idea of ancient Egyptian religion. It expresses the basic world-view whereby the various fields of nature and culture--cosmic life, state policy, the cult, science, art, ethics and the private life of the individual--_form a unity_. [emphasis mine]

It is upon this assumption of unity in diversity that this work is conceived and pursued.

1.3.7 Continuity and Development

Another assumption which informs the conceptual framework of this project is that in spite of obvious and general change in ancient Egyptian thought and practice which one expects in every society, there was also continuity. Thus, Maat, as the fundamental principle of Egyptian ethics and religion, endures in spite of changed concepts of it in various periods of Egyptian history. Moreover, even

when we allow for a drastic change in the Amarna Period (Aldred, 1988; Bonnel, 1990), and in the Late Period (Otto, 1954; Brunner, 1963), Maat still maintains its ontological and ethical significance albeit in modified form and without always use of the category Maat. Thus, Maat remains the way of life (*w3t n ꜥnḫ*), i.e., truth, justice, righteousness, from the Old Kingdom through the Late Period, including the Greek and Roman conquest. And other concepts, as will be shown below, show a similar longevity.

In the discussion of continuity and change which is central to ancient Egyptian studies discourse, it is generally conceded that change is an essential aspect of Kemetic history as well as the history of all societies. The essential question, however, for this author and others is to what degree and in what manner? Frankfort (1961:59ff) surely offers the paradigmatic view of essential changelessness of ancient Egyptian society, more specifically its ethical and social thought, arguing that the concept of "development of social and ethical thought in Egypt" is essentially "untenable if we study the evidence without prejudice--that is, without evolutionary bias." He goes on to say that "the differences between the earlier and later texts seem largely to have been caused by accidents of preservation, while resemblance consists, on the contrary, in a significant uniformity of tenor." Given this, he con-

cludes reality and ancient Egyptian commitment to permanence over change,

> [i]n this as in other respects Egyptian culture preserved its distinctive character throughout its long history and we may therefore speak of an Egyptian way of life without dwelling on the modifications which the basic concept underwent in the course of time.

C.J. Bleeker (1967) makes a similar point in responding to Breasted's (1934) seminal work on the Dawn of Conscience in which he traced the development of the moral tradition in ancient Egypt. Questioning the utility of such a development-focused study, Bleeker proposes a study of the enduring aspects of Kemetic culture.

> The most salient feature of this civilization and religion is, that at the beginning of the historical period a style arose, which is easily recognizable as typically Egyptian and which continued well into the last decades of this culture.

However, he concedes that "[n]aturally there were great changes in a cultural, social, moral and religious respect in the course of more than three millennia." For example, changes during the Amarna and New Kingdom periods are evident, interesting and on one level worthy of study. But he concludes that "from a religious view point little of importance has changed." In a word, "the basic patterns remain the same." For "[t]he motifs which already prevailed in the Old Kingdom, are still to be found in the texts and in the representations of the temples of the Ptolemaic period."

Obviously, Frankfort and Bleeker have overstated their case, but they have focused on problems of studying Kemetic society and suggested certain foci of consideration which invite critical discussion. Granted there is inevitable change in every society, but does this preclude continuity? Are not the basic concepts of kingship, judgment and justification, immortality, divine order, tradition, doing Maat and Maat itself marked by continuity as well as change? And is there not also what Frankfort calls an "evolutionary bias" among many Egyptologists which clouds judgment and gives more weight to change and less to continuity than might be warranted? Baines (1987:98), an advocate of the development and diversity model, seems to recognize this and suggests that given that varying degrees of integration of new practices existed in the various periods of Kemetic history, "[a] social analysis along these lines implies that some changes in religion may not be as great as is often thought . . . ."

Another focus for discussion is the tendency to confuse the ancient Egyptians' desire for "that which endures in the midst of things which are overthrown" as evidence of changelessness (Karenga, 1984:107). Certainly, it is deficient scholarship to confuse a people's cultural preference for the permanent with the actual flow of events around them. But it is equally intellectually problematic not to recognize that cultural preference for maintenance of tradition

is indeed a factor in the pace and nature of change. Thus, Wilson's (1956:76) claim that "ancient Egypt survived 'unchanged' for long centuries by changing constantly and ignoring changes" seems to misstate the issue. For the issue is not ancient Egypt's possible self-deception, but her conception of tradition and its effect on the rate and character of change within ancient Egyptian society. This commitment to tradition, as I argue below, is indispensable to a critical understanding of Kemetic culture in general and its ethics in particular.

Bleeker and Frankfort's contention that there is an identifiable ancient Egyptian way of life which keeps its basic character throughout its history is a difficult one to deny. For if there is no distinct Kemetic culture with relative continuity, then it lacks the ideational, practical and organic integrity to have either identity and existence. In other words, without such a cultural integrity with adequate permanence, there is no identity or possibility of existence. What we study as ancient Egypt already implies a relatively stable and permanent society, a society whose continuity is not enervated or dissolved by either the diversity or changes within it. The concern of this work then, is to focus on continuity within change. For without this continuity, there is not only no ancient Egypt, but also no moral tradition available for study.

1.4 Tasks and Delimitations of the Study

The central interest and fundamental thrust of this project is the delineation and critical examination of the moral ideal in ancient Egypt with an eye toward revealing its capacity for and potential contribution to modern moral discourse. To do this I will focus on the foundation of ancient Egyptian ethics, the concept of Maat, using the Declarations of Innocence of the Book of Coming Forth By Day as the central point of departure, as well as the Declarations of Virtues, the Sebait (The Instructions), and the Book of Khun-Anup which are the central moral texts of ancient Egypt. Within this dual interpretive focus, Maat is the philosophical ideal and the Declarations of Innocence represent an ideal conception of the moral practice within this framework. For the Declarations are, in fact, an evolved summary of the major ethical concerns of ancient Egypt which appear in more or less standard form in the New Kingdom in Coming Forth (Budge, 1898; Maystre, 1937; Allen, 1974; Saleh, 1984; Faulkner, 1985; Dondelinger, 1987).

In this regard, it is important to note that I accept the intellectual, indeed, cultural impossibility of translating ancient texts in terms which totally represent ancient approaches to thought and practice. The limitations of time, space and culture are obvious. In this regard, Finnestad (1989b:37) has made an important contribution to understanding the problematic of interpretation and transla-

tion. The problematic he poses includes: 1) imposition of modern ways of thinking and communication; 2) the problem of taking into account the "total hermeneutical situation;" and 3) the challenge of giving due weight to the historical. One is faced with a formidable task, he notes, because "transferring a message into a language understandable to modern man necessarily entails reference to world views of modern man." What one must recognize, then, is that one's "interpretation is both a result of perception, analysis, explanation _and_ one of adding something to the material." For "in all interpretation, a supplementing act is involved through which the receiver makes the contents of the message comprehensible to him." Given this,

> [t]he important task is not to prove this; it is plain to see, but to clarify its relationship to the message of the document, and ask the hermeneutical question: in what sense is the interpretation an exegetical 'reading into' . . .and in what sense is it an exegetical 'drawing out of' the document.

It is this tension between "_reading into_" and "_drawing out of_" that lies at the center of the challenge to render a contemporary interpretation of the moral ideal in ancient Egypt which is both plausible and insightful and yet constantly conscious of its own limitations as a hermeneutical reconstruction.

Secondly, it should also be noted that because I write within a definite ethical tradition, my categories and conceptualization will reflect this. This work began in the

context of intellectual collaboration to make live again (*sḏb*) an ancient tradition. It therefore became an act of restoration (*srwḏ*), an effort, as the ancient Egyptians taught, to restore that which is in ruins and raise up that which was damaged and destroyed. As an intellectual project, the renewal of tradition centers on hermeneutical reconstruction which, of necessity, requires new modes of articulation both in terms of concepts and categories. This has meant using old concepts and categories in new ways and creating new ones which more accurately and usefully serve the analysis.

Such a conceptual reconstruction begins with the category and concept of Maat itself which is used here to signify the ethical and religious tradition of ancient Egypt. There was no name for ancient Egyptian religion. As with other African cultures, religion in ancient Egypt was an integral part of life and required no name for its thought or practice. But the study and renewal of the tradition required a name and thus I (1990; 1989) proposed in the early 80's that the renewed tradition be called Maat. For there is no category or concept as definitive of ancient Egyptian spirituality--religion and ethics--as Maat. Having established the category Maat as the name of the tradition, its adjectival derivatives developed in the discourse. Thus, one speaks of Maatian ethics, Maatian theology,

Maatian ontology, Maatian anthropology, Maatian social practice, the Maatian tradition, the Maatian person, etc.

In addition to this use of Maat, this work will use other categories and concepts reflective of similar use in the renewed tradition. Kemet and Kemetic are used interchangeably with ancient Egypt and ancient Egyptian, as Kemet is the vocalized form of Kmt, the formal name ancient Egyptians used for their country. In terms of texts: Coming Forth is the abbreviation for the Book of Coming Forth By Day, often called the Book of the Dead; Declarations or DOI is used for the Declarations of Innocence; and the Virtues or DOV is used for the Declarations of Virtues (DOV), also called ideal biographies or autobiographies, and the category "Book of" is used to refer to many texts especially the Sebait, i.e., the Book of Ptahhotep the Book of Amenomope, etc. Also, what is called among other things, the "Eloquent Peasant" is called the Book of Khun-Anup in the renewed Maatian tradition, and the Book of Merikara is called the Book of Kheti or Kheti's Instructions for Merikara. Moreover, conceptually speaking, the renewed Maatian tradition recognizes one Supreme Divinity whose primary name is Ra and who has many manifestations in and as other divine forms. Thus, one reads Kemetic phrases such as "Ra in his identity as . . ." or "Ra in his name of . . . ."

Also, it is important to note that my reference to and discussion of classical African ethics does not intend to

suggest any more for the term "African" than is indicated by the terms "European" (Western), "Asian" (Oriental) or "Latin American." The discussion of _African_ philosophy, ethical or otherwise, simply suggests shared orientations born of similar cultural experiences. As Gyekye (1987:x) notes, "[i]t is the underlying cultural unity or identity of the various individual thinkers that justifies references to varieties of thought as wholes, such as Western, European or Oriental philosophy." In other words, he continues,

> . . .even though the individual thinkers who produced what is known as Western philosophy are from different European or Western nations, we nonetheless refer to such body of philosophical ideas as Western philosophy (in addition to, say, French, German or British philosophy).

One can justifiably conclude that "the real reason for this is surely the common cultural experience and orientation of those individual thinkers."

Likewise, in spite of the obvious differences among Indian, Chinese and ancient Persian philosophy, as well as the differences among Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist thought, they are generally called Asian philosophy. And as Tu Wei Ming (1985:7) states, it is based on the notion of "shared orientations." Therefore, to say African philosophy is to assume certain shared orientations based on similar cultural experiences. Among these shared orientations are: 1) centrality of community; 2) respect for tradition; 3) high level spirituality and ethical concern; 4) harmony with nature; 5) the concept of the sociality of selfhood; 6)

veneration of ancestors; and 7) the concept of the continuity of being. And to say "classical" in the phrase "classical African ethics" refers both to a certain chronology and level of achievement. In the sense of historical location, the classical here is ancient, but in the cultural sense, it refers to a civilization or culture whose level of achievement invites, indeed demands, both preservation and emulation. And certainly ancient Egypt in both the historical and cultural sense is a classical civilization for both Africa and humanity.

Also, I use ethical and moral, ethics and morality interchangeably even though I recognize as a matter of categorical preciseness the distinction. It is for this reason that my main title is "Maat, the Moral Ideal of Ancient Egypt:" and the subtitle is "A Study in Classical African Ethics." The stress on the moral ideal is both a chosen focus to delineate the concept and practice of Maat as reflected principally in the <u>Declarations of Innocence</u> and <u>Declarations of Virtue</u>, which is the DOI's primary source, as well as a recognition that Maatian ethics of ancient Egypt, is an ethical doctrine rather than a system of ethics. Maatian ethics, before its recent revival, did not set forth any definitive or explicit moral theory or analysis of moral concepts. As mentioned above, it is noted for its lack of dogma, open-texture and resistance to orthodoxy (Tobin, 1989:6). It does, however, have a central

moral focus and rich theoretical possibilities as is expressed in the polysemic concept and moral ideal of Maat. For here one finds the grounds for the conception, practice and justification of the good (nfrw). The challenge of this work, then, is to present the doctrine of Maat in the language of modern moral discourse, while at the same time preserving and building on its distinctiveness as a moral ideal capable of inspiring and sustaining philosophic reflection.

Finally, in the process of reading and interpreting the texts, I have studied and employed interpretations, translations and commentaries by Egyptologists to make valuable use of their vast scholarship as both a base to build on and as a point of departure for contestation and critique. In tne final analysis, however, I have ultimately relied on my own interpretations when I found myself unable to concede for conceptual or linguistic reasons a given standard interpretation. I have thus translated, retranslated and rephrased textual passages in order to extract from a given text its real and most relevant meanings as I understand them. And when I have differed from these standard Egyptological positions, I have offered alternative grounds for my own position.

This work, then, is pursued as a contribution to the development of a distinctive modern Maatian ethical discourse. And by its very nature, as a beginning and open-textured project, it is also an invitation to others for

intellectual engagement and challenge. For it is in the process of such indispensable exchange that not only is a clearer view of Maatian moral sensibility established, but also Maat demonstrates its capacity for meaningful contribution to modern moral discourse. The attempt here is both one of *interpretation* and *transmission* of an ethical tradition, a project in which tradition is seen not simply as a precondition and process into which one comes, but also as an ongoing product of one's efforts to understand and participate in it. For by such efforts of understanding and self-conscious participation, tradition is made to live and develop and thus, be effective and of value to its adherents.

II

THE MAATIAN IDEAL:
FROM THE OLD KINGDOM TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

2.1 Introduction: Formative Context

If with the correlative recognition of change, one can argue continuity in ancient Egyptian culture, the formative years of the Old Kingdom, are key to understanding and appreciating the character and course of ancient Egyptian culture and ethics (Breasted, 1934). As James (1979:44) states, this period "was undoubtedly a great formative time in which the bases of Egyptian civilization were firmly established." These included concepts of state and kingship, artistic conventions, writing, literary forms, technology, science, medicine and other achievements and disciplines of human knowledge (Grimal, 1992: Chapters 1-5; Gardiner, 1964: Chapter 5; Trigger et al, 1983: Chapter 2).

The socio-historical setting for Maatian ethics, then, unfolds in a period between 3000 and 2135 B.C.E., i.e., from the founding of the unified Kemetic state through its Old

Kingdom period. After passing through what Wilson (1956:43 ff) calls "the search for security and order," the Egyptian state was established out of two opposing kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt, in two successive unions. Breasted (1934: 19) states that:

> These two unions, the earliest great national organizations of men in history, brought before the minds of men an imposing fabric of the state which at length made a profound impression upon religion. (Breasted, 1934:19)

At the same time, however, as argued below, religion was always a critical force in the organization and shaping of the state, for it gave the state both its moral and political paradigm (Morenz, 1984: Chapter 1). This is reflected in the Pyramid Texts which contain concepts of judgment, justification and immortality based on Maat (Moret, 1922) and in the Sebait, (the Instructions), which offer an implicit and explicit theory and view of leadership and society based on Maat, the Egyptian moral and spiritual way (Brunner, 1988, 1992; Fox, 1980). And it is also reflected in the Declarations of Virtue which express similar views and values (Lichtheim, 1992).

Maatian ethics, then, evolved in a period of consolidation, growth, peace and security with Menes' conquest of Lower Egypt and the uniting it with Upper Egypt circa 3000 B.C.E., which laid the basis for the establishment of the First Dynasty and the expansion and growth of the Egyptian state (Peyera de Fianza, 1991). This expansion of the state

is marked by the development of two key institutions--divine kingship and a bureaucracy with a stress on meritocracy and moral leadership.

2.1.1 The Decisive Factor of Kingship

It has been stated that "[d]ivine kingship is the most striking feature of Egypt in these periods" (Kemp, 1983:71). This feature, as Frankfort (1948b) argued in his seminal work, Kingship and the Gods, is rooted in African culture. Rice (1991:48-49) concurs with this, defining divine kingship as "that most typically Egyptian of all philosophical and practical concepts" and concluding that "[i]t is to Africa that one must look for the most abiding characteristics of Egyptian kingship which made it the unique institution it was to become." Among the features of this unique institutions are: the divinity of the king, his obligation to do and defend Maat and thus uphold the cosmic order and society, and his acting as "the channel through which the powers of nature flowed into the body politic to bring human endeavor to fruition" (Frankfort, 1948b:34; Derchain, 1962; Assmann, 1970).

Kemp (1983:72) has pointed out that there are three basic texts which are important in understanding the conception and practice of divine kingship in ancient Egypt. They are the Shabaka Text, called also the Memphite theology, the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus and the Pyramid Texts. The Pyramid Texts (Faulkner, 1969; Sethe, 1908-22), the

oldest Kemetic literature, essentially paint a portrait of the king's capacity for eternal life as a divinity in the Otherworld (Moret, 1922). He is here portrayed as the son of God, Ra and shares with him a cosmic life, alternately serving Ra, imitating Ra and assimilating with Ra. Moreover, fragments of the Osiris-Horus-Seth narrative which is more definitively dealt with in the Shabaka Text appears here. Also, the king, as discussed below, is shown to have to justify himself "by what he has done" (PT 316d-17A) and to be innocent of accusation by man, woman, bird and beast (PT 1775a-b). And finally, the king establishes his claim of both the right to rule and to life in the Otherworld by claiming he has "put Maat (justice, order) in the place of isfet (chaos, wrong), its opposite" (PT 1775, 265).

The Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus which dates from the reign of Sesostris I (c. 1971 B.C.E.) is apparently a series of rituals with instructions designed for either royal ascension or the jubilee ceremony (Sethe, 1928; Helck, 1954; Barta, 1976). It again deals with the Osiris-Horus-Seth religious narrative which treats the king's rightful ascension to the throne of his deceased father. Again, it is this rite of passage which identifies the pharaoh with the divine and makes him Horus incarnate (Frankfort, 1948b; Goedicke, 1960). As supportive texts reaffirm, once in this role, the king becomes like and as a divinity or god, doing Maat and bringing order to the world.

The Shabaka Text, although copied by King Shabaka in the eighth century B.C.E., appears to be a "copy of a document composed much earlier, possibly in the Old Kingdom or even before, although this is a disputed matter" (Kemp, 1983:72; also see Junge, 1973 for a much later dating in the Ramessid period). The central importance of the text lies in its role of legimating kingship through the principle of right over might, and the positing of right as that which is loved and brings life and wrong as that which brings hatred and death. Moreover, it also contains a religious drama of creation and a religio-political drama of the founding of a united Egypt (Junker, 1940, 1941).

The Shabaka Text is notable and relevant, then, for several reasons relating to the evolution of Maatian ethical philosophy (Karenga, 1988:375ff). First, it is both cosmology and a theory of kingship which "describes the order of creation and makes the land of Egypt, as organized by Menes (The Uniter) an indissoluble part of that order" (Frankfort, 1948b:24). The monarchy becomes then a part of a divine plan and the social order becomes a reflection and part of the cosmic order. Secondly, it offers a principle of the triumph of right over might in the narrative of the struggle between Horus, the righteous, and his uncle, Setekh (Seth), the coercive, and through the decision of the Ennead in favor of Horus.

Thirdly, the Shabaka Text posits moral polarities of Maat as what is loved and rewarded with life and isfet, its opposite, as what is hated and punished with death. The text says:

> *(sw diw m3ʽt n) irrw mrrt*
> *(sw diw isft n) irrw msḏḏt*
> *sw diw ʽnḫ n ḥr-ḥtp*
> *sw diw mt n ḥr-ḫnbt* (57)
>
> Thus, Maat is given to one who does what is loved.
> And isfet is given to one who does what is hated.
> Thus life is given to the peaceful
> (literally, one bearing peace).
> and death is given to the wrongdoer
> (literally, one bearing crime).

Breasted (1934:38-40), assuming an early date for this, remarks on how the categories "loved" (approved) and "hated" (disapproved) and the text itself represent a "reflective morality" which is the oldest on record in human history. However, as commonly accepted, this text is much later, perhaps in the New Kingdom. Nevertheless, its concepts do emanate from the oldest reflective morality recorded and are key to Maatian ethics, especially in terms of the concepts of the need for the cultivation of love (*srd mrwt*) (Ptahhotep, 398) and reciprocity (*irt n irrw n.k*) (Vernus, 1985; De Meulenaere, 1965, 1984) which will be discussed below.

Fourthly, the principle by which the cosmic order and the social order are established is Maat. Thus, Maat is both a cosmic and social principle which sets the standard for both God and human. As I (1984:11) have argued elsewhere, Maat "is a divine concept, power and practice which not only

informed and aided the Creator's action, but was established as the fundamental concept, power and practice for the organization, maintenance and development of human society also." It is a link and dialectic which points to the Maatian concept of the need to constantly create and sustain a moral context for good thought, emotion, speech and conduct.

Given this, the fifth significant aspect of this doctrine of united cosmology and divine kingship is that it places an ethical obligation on the king, the civil service and community to do Maat, to uphold it and live it (Hornung, 1988). Comparatively speaking, it parallels the Confucian concept of the Mandate of Heaven (T'ien-ming) with its stress on legitimacy of rule through divine appointment and moral worthiness (Tu, 1979:49-52; Hall and Ames, 1987:208-216). But it also points to a shared responsibility of those who in daily operation of government must emulate and insure the righteousness demanded of the king.

Maat, then, is the order established by the Creator, and king and community are called upon by the sacred texts to preserve it, restore and enrich it. This is the call for and establishment of a Maatian or moral culture in which Maatian thought and practice take root and thrive. The king was morally compelled to drive out isfet, Maat's opposite, and establish Maat in its proper place so that one may say "the land is as it was at the first time" (Urk. IV:2026.19).

For as Frankfort (1948b:149) notes, "the order established at the beginning of the world was considered to be normative for all times." This meant that Ra as creator and king of the world and the pharaoh was in his likeness, i.e., creator, king, law-giver, etc.

Thus, it was said of Ramesses II in the 19th Dynasty, "You are the living likeness of your father Atum . . .for Authoritative Utterance is in your mouth, Understanding is in your heart and your speech is the shrine of Truth (Maat)" (KRI II:356.18). Again, at the coronation, Queen Hatshepsut in the 18th Dynasty is acknowledged and welcomed by the powers of heaven with the words, "Welcome, O daughter (of Amen-Ra). Behold your law and order in the land. You establish it, you set right that which is wrong in it (Urk. IV:247.12-15). They conclude saying "we acknowledge the descent of him (Amen-Ra) who created us" (Urk. IV:248.15). In Maatian ethics, divine kingship is both an <u>obligation</u> and <u>right</u> to rule. The obligation is to rule in righteousness and the right is derivative from and based on the successful execution of the obligation. This is also the concept of <u>imitatio dei</u>, or as in the ancient Egyptian, *irt mi R'*, which means "acting like Ra" or imitation of God through righteousness as discussed below in Chapter V.

Again, Seti I was praised at Abydos as follows: "You have fixed Maat in Egypt; it has become united with everyone" (Mariette, 1982:52.14-15). This is both sacred duty

and honor. It is this ethical framework from which the concept of social welfare evolves which is so prevalent in the sacred literature, especially in the Declarations of Innocence and Declarations of Virtue as well as the Sebait. In the context of this commitment, King Kheti teaches his son, Merikara both the concept of *snn nṯr* (imago dei) and *irt mi nṯr* (imitatio dei) for humans and the granting by God of earth and sky and all therein for humankind (Merikara, 130ff). Ra, he says, "has built His shrine around them and when they weep he hears" (134-135). And equally important, Kheti recognizes his moral obligation to the people and his need to imitate Ra, by asserting that Ra "made for them rulers even from the egg, leaders to lift the load from the back of the weak" (135-136). This does not mean that declaration and deed always coincided, but what one has is an ideal which serves as moral standard and inspiration for political leadership and community, and a yardstick by which rulers and other leaders were measured and could measure themselves as Kheti does in this text.

The divine installation of the king is further attested by a Middle Kingdom text, quoted below, which affirms the king's political and moral role (Assmann, 1970:17-22, 1989b: 58). The text says that Ra installed the king to judge humans, satisfy the divine, realize (*sḫpr*) Maat (rightness) and destroy (*sḥtm*) isfet (wrongness). He is also to make divine and evocation offering to divinities (*nṯrw*) and the

glorious spirits (*3ḫw*). It thus links the king with the divine, the blessed dead and humanity and suggests, as Baines (1991:129) notes, that "they are bound together by moral obligations." Moreover, Baines (1991:128) states, "kingship also provided a metaphor for the way others were to conduct their lives, so some aspects of the king's morality was to be emulated by the elite." It is this emulation by the elite and its role in constructing and disseminating ethical ideas and teachings which we treat below in the discussion of the bureaucracy.

However, it is first important to note that the king not only served as a moral exemplar for the elite, but also for the Egyptian people, especially the nobles and then the common people who during the First Intermediate Period began to appropriate concepts and practices once apparently an exclusive royal privilege. Moreover, it is also important to point out that doing Maat was linked to serving the king who loved and wished Maat. And in earlier autobiographies, persons presented themselves and justified themselves in terms of service to the king as well as rectitude (Lichtheim, 1988, 1992; Schenkel, 1965; Clère and Vandier, 1982).

By the Middle Kingdom, one also encounters a varied presentation of kingship. Especially important is Kheti's Sebait for his son Merikara mentioned above (Golenischeff, 1916; Volten, 1945:3-82). Here Kheti confesses a mistake and moral offense, accepts responsibility for this destruc-

tive act in his reign even though he did not commit it directly, and stresses that Maat is central to rulership. Among the principles he teaches his son are:

> May you be justified before God . . .Make your monument last through love of you. Respect the nobles, sustain the people. Make people come to you through your good character. Speak truth in your house that the princes of the earth might respect you. Uprightness is fitting for a ruler. For it is the front of the house that puts respect in the back. Do justice, that you may endure on earth. (Merikara, 30ff)

Also he affirms the divine appointment or installation of the king and his moral obligation to the people who he calls images (*snnw*) of God saying, as noted above, rulers were made "to lift the load from the back of the weak" (Merikara, 135-136). Thus, Maat is central to the concept of kingship and remained throughout Kemetic history although in varied ways.

2.1.2 Civil Service and Social Ethics

A second formative institution in the Old Kingdom is the state bureaucracy. Such bureaucracy is central to both the formulation and evolution of Maatian ethics. It is they who formulated the ethical ideals of both king and civil servant as the Sebait and Virtues reveal. In these texts, there is a clear stress on social responsibility and moral leadership rooted in the concept of Maat. And much of it is not only directed toward this class but also from it (Williams, 1972b; 1981; Urk. I; AEL I: Part One).

The bureaucracy was essentially a civil service and "The practice of official authority was inspired by disinterested service and justice on the part of the bureaucrats in the interests of the king and his subjects" (James, 1984:52). The chief executive officer of the bureaucrats was the prime minister (*ṯ3ty*) and those under him in the greatest numbers bore the title "*sš*," literally scribe, but with the extended meaning of civil servant and intellectual. Thus, sesh became synonymous with civil service and the scribal profession was "the principal repository of literacy and learning in the land." Moreover, the mastery of reading and writing were, James states, "essential for proper exercise of administration, and the scribal schools, . . .were undoubtedly academies for the bureaucracy."

Williams (1972b:215) notes that "information from contemporary Egyptian sources is sparse with respect to scribal education in the early periods." However, he continues, "it is clear that in the Old Kingdom officials personally trained suitable lads in their own homes." Both the Sebait of Ptahhotep and Hardjedef seem to attest to this (AEL I:58ff; Zába, 1956). In the case of Ptahhotep, he asks the king for the power to appoint a successor, literally "a staff for old age," so that he may instruct him in the ways of the ancestors and the divine so that he may serve the king and society. He says:

> May this servant be ordered to make a staff of old age so that he may instruct him in the words

of those who have heard the counsels of ancestors
who have listened to the gods. (Ptahhotep, 28-32)

The king grants permission saying, "Instruct him, then, in the sayings of the past, so that he may become an example to the children of the great" (Ptahhotep, 37-39). Thus, one sees here the evolution of leadership by moral example, a concept that is central to both kingship and civil service. In fact, Ptahhotep reaffirms this lesson toward the end of his Instructions (Sebait), telling his son

s nb sb3 mi ir.f
sḏd ḥr msw
iḫ ḏd.n.sn ẖrdw.sn
ir bi m rdi ʿḏt
srwḏ m3ʿt ʿnḫ msw.k (593-597).

Every man teaches as he acts
He will speak to his children
so that they will then speak to their children.
(Therefore) set a good example; don't give offense
For if Maat is maintained your children will live.

In addition to personal instruction in homes, there is also evidence of "organized teaching of youngsters for court service in the Old Kingdom. And thus, although Williams (1972b:215) notes that "the word for 'school' (*ʿt n sb3*) first appears in the Tenth Dynasty," this does not preclude the existence of schools attached to the court which carried no formal name. However, Williams cites evidence for such a school on the Stela of Ikhernofret which is in the Twelfth Dynasty under Sesostris III.

The bureaucracy continued to grow and "with the consolidation and expansion of the state at the outset of the Twelfth Dynasty after the civil wars and social upheaval of the First Intermediate Period," William observes, "an enlarged bureaucracy was required." This continued the development of a code of ethics for civil service and leadership as the existence of the Sebait and the Instructions to the Prime Minister attest (Urk. IV:1086-1093). The prime minister's office and tradition were significant, then, not only for its administrative role but also for: 1) the formal royal instructions by which the prime minister carried out his duties, and 2) the tradition among prime ministers of setting down Instructions (Sebait) for those who succeeded them. These texts, in turn, became one of the main sources of Maatian ethics. Although this is a matter of debate, it appears that the oldest complete book of Instructions is by Ptahhotep, vizier or prime minister of King Isesi of the Fifth Dynasty (c.2350-2310 B.C.E.) (Zába, 1956; Jequier, 1911; Dévaud, 1916).

One can obtain an important view of the professional ethics of the civil service, also, by turning to The Instructions of the Prime Minister (Urk. IV:1086-1093; Théodoridès, 1984). This text was possibly developed in the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty, as a standard for bureaucratic ethics which are reflected, reinforced and expanded in the general ethics of the Sebait and other ethical sources.

Found in the tomb of the prime minister Rekhmira of the 18th Dynasty, it contains ethical values which are central to the Maatian concept of moral rulership (Davies, 1973b:pl. cxvi). First, it calls for due process, seeing "that everything is done in accordance with what is specified by law," "letting a man plead his innocence," and not dismissing "a petitioner before you have considered his words." For the petitioner prefers "consideration of his petition to judgment in the matter." Secondly, there is a command to avoid bias for "God hates biased behavior." "Treat equally the one you know and the one you do not know, the one who is near and the one who is far away." Thirdly, the prime minister is commanded to avoid arrogance. Finally, one is commanded to do justice. "You will succeed in fulfilling your office by acting justly," it concludes. For "What is wanted is that justice be done" (see also BAR II:266-270).

This call for justice is, in fact, is a call for Maat, for Maat is both the moral and linguistic equivalent of truth, justice and righteousness. What one has here, as James (1984:73) observes, is an established ethical code which was taken seriously by the rulers of Egypt and the people. For Maat and its command for justice and impartiality "embodied a long-established, and much-cherished aspiration which formed one of the principle tenets of behavior in public and private life in ancient Egypt." It is in this context that civil servants, who served in the capacity of

advisor to the king, note among their declarations of moral and social virtues that they "filled the ears of Horus (the king) with Maat" (Urk. IV:961.13, 1172.13) and that the king praised them "for doing his Maat" (Urk. IV:16.11-12). Thus, Maat was the foundation and motivating principle for both governance and the paradigmatic just and harmonious society (Breasted, 1934:202-211).

The prime minister, Rekhmira, in whose tomb we find these Instructions to the Prime Minister reaffirms this commitment to Maat. In his autobiographical moral self-presentation he says:

wṯs.n.i m3ʿt r k̇3w n pt
pẖr.n.i nfrw.s r wsẖ n t3
ḥtp.s m fnḏ.sn mi (mḥyt)
- - - - - - - -
iw wp.n.i (m3r) ḥnʿ wsr
iw nḥm.n.i s3-ʿ(m) nḫt-ʿ
iw ḫsf.n.i nšni n ḏw k̇d
iw dr.n.i ʿwn-ib r wnwt.f
- - - - - - - -
iw nḫ.n.i ẖ3rd iwty hi
sm(n.n).i s3 iwʿw ḥr nst it.f
iw rdi (.n.i t n ḥ̈kr)
mw n ib
iw iwf mrḥt ḥbs n iwty --
iw srwḏ.n.i i3w (rd.n.i n.f mdw).i
rdi.n.i ḏd im i3yt pw sp nfr
bwt.i isft
n ir.n.i sy
- - - - - - - -
ink is m3ʿ ḫrw ḫr nṯr
- - - - - - - -
n sẖ ḥr.i rsy r s3-ʿ
hr nḥm n šsp ḫsy n wʿ (Urk. IV:1077.13-1079.6)

I exalted Maat to the heights of heaven.
I caused its goodness to pervade the
breadth of the earth,
So that it rested in their nose like
the north wind . . . .
- - - - - - - -

I judged the (humble) and the rich (alike)
I rescued the weak from the strong
I restrained the rage of evil of character.
I suppressed the greedy in his hour.
- - - - - - - -
I protected the widow who had no husband.
And established the son and heir on the
seat of his father
I gave (bread to the hungry), water to
the thirsty,
Meat, oil and clothes to those who had
none.
I made the old man secure, giving him
my staff,
Causing the old women to say, "It is a
good deed."
I hated evil and I did not do it.
- - - - - - - -
I was justified before God
- - - - - - - -
I was not neglectful at all toward the weak,
Moreover, I did not accept a bribe from
anyone.

This moral self-portrait is a definitive representation of the interrelatedness of Maat as public and personal morality and of how laws or governmental regulations are often the carriers of a society's morality. Note the desire to make Maat both the highest standard of the land and pervasive in society. Also, note how the analogy of Maat resting on the nose of people is meant to signify its life-giving power. For as the text of Khun-Anup says, "Doing Maat is breath to the nose" (146). Finally, it is important to note that the hinge on which this public morality turns is concern and care for the vulnerable, i.e., the weak, poor, elderly, the hungry, thirsty, the clothesless, et al.

This same ethic of Maat is restated, reinforced and elaborated in the Sebait, literary products of prime

ministers, seshu (scribes) and priests. Maat required justice, personal and social, and the departure point was respect for the human personality, both as an image of God stated in the Book of Kheti and as a fellow equal human as posited in Coffin Text 1130 in which the Creator, Ra, establishes the principle of equality through his "making every person like his or her fellow," and creating wind, water and earth "so that the humble might benefit from (them) like the great."

2.1.3 A Context of Peace and Stability

Another aspect of socio-historical setting in which Maatian ethics was shaped, was Egypt's secure and peaceful context. As James (1984:71) notes, the settled, peaceful and tradition-oriented life "encouraged a more placid and benevolent attitude to humanity than might be found in countries afflicted by endemic warfare and poor living conditions." In other words, "[i]n Egypt where society was nurtured in such relatively comfortable conditions, the virtues of moderation and justice were more easily practiced and sustained than in lands torn by conflict," such as Palestine and Mesopotamia. Wilson (1956:13) agrees with this, arguing that

> The relative sense of security bred in the ancient Egyptian an essential optimism about his career in this world and the next, and it permitted a marked element of individual freedom for the ordinary Egyptian.

Continuing, Wilson maintains that

> in contrast to his neighbors--the Babylonians and the Hebrews--the ancient Egyptian was not constrained to slavish obedience to authority in the interests of the complete conformance of the community.

On the contrary, "[h]is rules were general and well-understood, but within those rules he enjoyed a high degree of liberty to exercise his own personality."

Thus, the model person is not the warrior or even priest, but the gentle person (*sfw*)--who serves and is responsible. Sheltered by a strong central government, a self-sufficient economy, a capable army and a difficult geography which discouraged invaders, Kemet, up to the 8th Dynasty, enjoyed an unparalleled era of peace, development and great achievement (Grimal, 1991:140; Kemp, 1983:112). And although this state of things was interrupted in the decentralization process of the First Intermediate Period, when order and strong central government were restored in the Middle Kingdom, Kemet's and creative literature flourished and expressed a self-confidence, optimism and humanity reflective of the socio-political state of things (Grimal, 1992: Chapter 7; Gardiner, 1964: Chapter 6).

In summary, then, Maatian ethics evolves in a context of social order and development, and key to its emergence is the <u>sesh</u> (scholar, scribe or bureaucrat). It is from the sesh that the formulation of the ethical vision emerges and it is they who advocate and attempt to bring into being the

just society. In a word, it is they who craft and give intellectual content to the moral ideal in ancient Egypt. Moreover, the scribes as writers of ethical treatises pose a philosophical paradigm of righteous leadership supported by a moral culture as key to the achievement of the just society through Maat (Breasted, 1934: Chapter 9, 11, 12). And it is this paradigm which offers a philosophical framework and grounding for the conceptualization and development of the ethics of large-scale organizations and the central role moral or Maatian leadership plays in this.

2.1.4 The Economic Conditions

The economy of Egypt in the Old Kingdom rested on a solid agricultural base, maritime trade and an urban commerce suggesting "a complex and extensive marketing system" (Trigger et al, 1983:81). It was managed, as mentioned above, by a large professional civil service which produced its laws, rules and ethics as well as "collected taxes in kind throughout the country, stored these goods in government warehouses and supervised their distribution . . ." (Trigger et al, 1983:58). They, of course, ruled in the name and at the pleasure of the king, but were effectively in control of the daily operation of the government. Within the "class" or "stratum" structure of Egyptian society, the royal family in its extended sense was at the apex, followed by land-holding nobles, civil servants, merchants, peasants and domestic servants.

In spite of the erroneous biblical depiction of ancient Egypt as a land of bondage and the uncritical scholarship which supported these contentions, many scholars now concede there was no large-scale slavery in early Egypt in the modern sense or even Greek sense of the word, that essentially domestic servant is a more accurate category, and that temporary conscription, not slavery, was the nature of labor recruitment for building the pyramids (Ruffle, 1977: 36; James, 1972:37-38; Bierbrier, 1982:12-13). James (1972: 37) contends that "Herodotus may have been chiefly responsible for the belief that the pyramids were built by slave labour." But the Hebrew myth and narrative of bondage in and exodus from ancient Egypt in Judeo-Christian literature was also contributive to this charge (Redford, 1992:257ff).

Bierbrier (1982:12) states that "it cannot be emphasized too strongly that these men (who worked on the pyramids) were not slaves but temporary conscripts." In fact, what one has here is a mandatory national service on national building projects similar to mandatory military service. "Every Egyptian citizen was in theory required to lend a hand in this effort and had to provide the state with a certain number of days of labor" (Bierbrier, 1982:10,12). Bierbrier tells us that "The organization of manpower would have been straightforward. During the time of the Nile flood when land would have been covered with water and unfit for agriculture, the farmers could be conscripted to work on

the royal pyramid complex." In addition to these workers, professional craftsmen were also employed.

Recent discoveries have been made which reaffirm the public works nature of the pyramid projects and cast added doubt on the idea that the pyramids were built by enslaved or forced labor (Maugh, 1993). The discoveries provide items which reflect a daily life of work and enjoyment, payment, family forms, art and literature. Again, this is in stark contrast to concepts of bondage which have pervaded many earlier works on the subject. This project on a large cemetery associated with the Great Pyramid at Giza is headed by Egyptologist Zahi Hawass who is writing a book on these new discoveries.

Finally, it is of value to note that the Maatian ideal condemned coerced labor as clearly and often attested to in the texts. In the Old Kingdom, in the autobiography of the Masterbuilder, Nekhebu (Dunham, 1938; Urk. I:215-221) we find a clear disavowal of coerced labor. As part of his declaration of virtue, Nekhebu says: "Never did I beat a man so that he fell by my hand. Never did I enslave any people there. As for any persons with whom I had arguments, it was I who pacified them" (Urk. I:217.4-7). Likewise, the nomarch Henku (Urk. I:77.4) disavows coerced labor and sexual exploitation of women saying, "No daughter of yours was ever made to do forced labor (or enslaved) . . .her arms against me." Moreover, the nomarch Khety notes proudly that he also

did not use forced labor in his building and development of the town of Siut (Griffith, 1889: pl. 15). He says, "I gave a gift to this town without use of corvée labor (*h3w*) from Upper Egypt or draft labor (s'*ḳyw*) from Lower Egypt." Such declarations are the Maatian ideal and certainly do not signify the total absence of the use of coerced labor, no more than the U.S. Constitution or any other legal or moral document does. But the texts do give us evidence of the Maatian ideal on this issue, and joined to historical evidence cited above, contribute to a more balanced picture of Kemetic society and tend to undermine the distorted religious view of ancient Egypt as some mythic "land of bondage."

It is relevant to note here, then, that as Moret (1940: 3) states,

> Society in Egypt is composed of permeable classes; it behaves as our modern societies with inequities of fact . . .but the divine and royal law proclaims the principle of equality of all.

This ideal of equality, Moret continues, is based in the principle of Maat and the king is not only its chief interpreter and guardian on earth, "it is he above all who renders an account of his acts in Maat before being admitted to the other world." Also, significant is the fact that not only does "the law of Maat address all without social distinction: kings, princes, great and small officials, people engaged in all kinds of work," it also places equal burden of moral conduct on them. Thus, the duties of social

solidarity are found in the Declarations of Virtue as early as the Old Kingdom and persons are concerned with how history and heaven will judge them. Breasted (1934:13) contrasts Maat and its insistence on equal justice for all with Hammurabi's code which "dispenses justice according to the social station of the litigant or defender."

It was again, however, the civil service administrator who organized the huge labor force referred to above, ostensibly based on experience gained in irrigation works and projects for the Nile as well as handled "the administration of law and justice, an obligation for which justification was found in the Egyptians' concept of Maat to the extent that some offices bore amongst their titles that of 'priest of Maat'" (Kemp, 1983:83). Also, as mentioned above, the Sebait (which are central treatises on ethics) were written, at least at first, essentially to establish the ethical grounds for a Maatian leader or civil servant. It was through teaching, tradition and development that Maat became the collective moral focus and legacy of the entire Egyptian people.

However, as Frankfort (1961:61) notes, given this origin in the context of government and the stress on success or prosperity, many scholars make "a pragmatic interpretation" of the Sebait. But when Ptahhotep gives advice for leadership, it is both practical and moral (Zába, 1956). For in the final analysis, ancient Egyptian morality

requires proof in practice. A key category in Maatian ethics is "*3ḫ*" or akh which means both moral and practical good. Thus, when Ptahhotep says Maat is akh or good and effective, good is both of moral and practical value (88.L2). It is in a word, not only righteous, but right, not only morally good but effective, advantageous and beneficial. For Ptahhotep, then, Maat is not only right, it is effective, it works and yields benefit. And it is in this dual value that the greatness (*wrt*) and goodness (*nfrw*) of Maat lie (Ptahhotep, 88.L2).

We turn now to a brief history of the evolution of Maat as a moral concept and practice. To do this, a critical review of some of the works from sources of Maatian ethics is necessary, i.e., religious texts, the DOV, the Sebait, the moral narrative of Khun-Anup, and the Books of Contemplation also called "complaints" or "Klagen" by Egyptologists. This will lay the basis, then, for a discussion of the Declarations of Innocence (DOI) as a codification of Maatian ethics in the New Kingdom.

2.2 The Evolution of the Maatian Ideal: The Old Kingdom

One of the most interesting aspects of the study of Maat as a moral concept and practice is its development from its central role in royal conception to a widespread moral practice and ethical heritage of the ancient Egyptian people. A review of its growth and development along these

lines is both instructive and engaging. Breasted (1934:122) spoke of the development of morality in the Old Kingdom as an essential aspect of human development. He asserted that:

> We are dealing with the <u>earliest</u> surviving body of evidence disclosing historically that man's moral ideas are the product of social conditions and form a part of a social process.

Moreover, he continues saying that:

> in this period we are watching the higher aspects of an evolutionary process which cannot be observed at so early a stage anywhere else in the career of man. We are contemplating the emergence of a sense of moral responsibility as it was gradually assuming an increasing mandatory power over human conduct, a development which was moving towards the assertion of conscience as an influential force.

Breasted (1934:xv) has also pointed to another point of interest and engagement in his contention that not only does ancient Egyptian morality forms a fundamental part of human moral development, it also contributed significantly to what we understand as the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. "It is now quite evident," he says:

> That the ripe social and moral development of mankind in the Nile Valley, which is three thousand years older than that of the Hebrews contributed essentially to the formation of the Hebrew literature which we call the Old Testament. Our moral heritage therefore derives from a wider <u>human</u> past enormously older than the Hebrews, and it has come to us rather <u>through</u> the Hebrews than <u>from</u> them.

In fact, he concludes, "the rise of man to social idealism took place long before the traditional theologians' age of revelation." These specific contentions have been taken up by various scholars and certainly Ronald J. Williams (1962;

1969; 1972a; 1977a; 1977b) stands out as a definitive authority on Israel's debt to Egypt. However, these particular concerns are beyond the scope of this work and thus such comparisons and parallels will be offered only where deemed important to the analytical treatment of Maatian concepts and practices. But Breasted's contentions concerning ancient Egypt's role in general in the moral development of humankind are engaging and do invite critical consideration in the course of study of the development of the concept and practice of Maat.

2.2.1 The Pyramid Texts

The oldest source for the category of Maat as a moral concept and practice is the Pyramid Texts (Piankoff, 1969; Faulkner, 1969; Mercer, 1952; Sethe, 1908-22). Maat evolves in these texts in a context of a theology at whose center the king is firmly fixed (Anthes, 1959, 1954; Barta, 1981). In such a context Maat becomes a means of defining the activities, aspirations and justifications of the king. Maat is posed as a divine spirit before Ra (*m3ʿt m-b3ḥ Rʿ*) in PT 1774 and behind him (*r-s3 Rʿ*) in PT 1582. The king is engaged with Maat in several basic ways. First he is said, in the texts, to have brought Maat with him as a "doer of Maat."

> *pr wnis ir m3ʿt,*
> *int.f s is ḫr.f* (PT 319b)
>
> Unas comes forth as a doer of Maat
> that he may bring it, it being with him.

This going forth (*prt*) and bringing Maat (*int m3't*) is repeated in PT 323 and becomes a fundamental way of engaging Maat (Teeter, 1990).

It seems clear that the king brings and offers Maat so that he may be justified (*m3' ḫrw*) before heaven and earth. Thus, he says "O you who ferry across the righteous boatless (*iwy m3'*) I am deemed righteous (*m3' ḫrw*) in heaven and on earth (PT 1188). A claim to have no accusers among humans, animals or birds is also made (PT 386-387). This concern with vindication is central to Maatian ethics and culminates in the New Kingdom in the Book of Coming Forth By Day, especially in Chapter 125; in the DOV and in the general theology of judgment and justification as discussed below in Chapter IV).

Maat is also engaged by the king as a life-giving sustenance and is joined in the text with the issue of protection of Egypt. In PT 1483, the king is described as one of the four sons of Horus "who live by Maat, who lean on their staffs and watch over Upper Egypt" (*'nḫiw m m3't tw3iw ḥr d'mw.sn mnhsiw t3-šm'*). This stress on Maat as that by which God and king live is also a central concept in the theology and ethics of Maat and appears in full form in the New Kingdom practice of offering Maat (Teeter, 1990).

Finally, the king is posed in the Pyramid Texts as one who appears and acts like Ra. In one utterance, the text says:

psḏ m Rʿ dr ḏ3t
sʿḥʿ m3ʿt r-s3 Rʿ (PT 1582)

May you shine as Ra, repressing wrong and
causing Maat to stand behind Ra.

But, perhaps, the most definitive expression of the king's acting like Ra is that he puts Maat in the place of isfet, its opposite. As the texts say:

pt m ḥtpw t3 m 3wt-ib
sḏm.n.sn dd N m3ʿt (m st isft) (PT 1775)

Heaven is at peace; earth is in joy
For they have heard the king
has set right (in the place of wrong).

and

iy.n Wnis m iw n sisi
di.n Wnis m3ʿt im.f m st isft (PT 265)

Unas has come forth from the Island of Fire.
Unas has set Maat in it in the place of isfet.

This putting of Maat in the place of isfet or replacing evil with good is fundamental to both royal and later general human responsibility. Thus the Pyramid Texts establish the basis of moral justification. For the texts say, the king "wishes to be justified by what he has done" (PT 316d-317a). And what he has done is Maat or again, "put Maat in the place of isfet." Moreover, as stated above, he has suppressed wrongdoing and also he states, "there is no evil which he has done (*n ḏwt irt.n NN*) (PT 1238a).

Finally, it is important to note that as early as the 4th Dynasty, kings began to take royal names which expressed a commitment to Maat. King Snefru of the 4th Dynasty is called "*Nb M3ʿt*," possessor of Maat, and his son is named

"*Nfr M3‘t*" or Maat is good/beautiful. In the 5th Dynasty, King Userkaf was called "*Ir-M3‘t*," the doer of Maat, and King Isesi had as part of his titulary the name "*M3‘t K3 R‘*," Maat is the essence or Ka of Ra. Moreover, Kitchen (1987) in his study on titularies in the Ramessid period, showed that kings of this period designed their titularies to include Maat as an ideal expression of kingship.

In the Pyramid Texts, then, Maat is a moral claim for justification before history and heaven, humanity and God by the king. This moral claim is at the same time the core of the claim which legitimates the king's rule (Assmann, 1990, 1989a; Bergman, 1972). It is in this connection that Bergman calls Maat "the fundamental state myth," i.e., an ideology which undergirds the king's right to rule and thus the legitimacy of the Kemetic state. At the heart of this legitimation doctrine of state is the dual claim that the king was placed in office to realize Maat and destroy isfet, its opposite, and that he has indeed accomplished this.

Assmann (1989b:58) has made available a text dating probably from the Middle Kingdom which explicitly provides us with evidence of divine intention for the king and thus a strong support for his legitimacy. It reads:

iw rdi.n R‘ niswt N
tp t3 n ‘nẖw
r nḥḥ ḥn‘ ḏt
ḥr wḏ‘ rmṯw ḥr sḥtp nṯrw
ḥr sḫpr m3‘t ḥr sḥtm isft
iw di.f htpwt n nṯrw
prt-ẖrw n 3ḫw

Ra has installed King N
upon the earth of the living
forever and eternity
judging people and satisfying the gods,
realizing Maat and destroying evil.
He gives offerings to the gods
and evocation offerings to the dead.

Thus, the text explains the king's claim in the Pyramid Texts that he has put Maat in the place of isfet and is without accusation. And it also reaffirms the central role of the king in realizing Maat and the role of Maat in the world.

This text finds parallels and corroboration in royal writings which elaborate on this theme and pose them in various ways. Such a text is the Building Inscription of Sesostris I (pBerlin 3029), a Middle Kingdom text copied by an 18th Dynasty scribe, in which Sesostris says:

msi.n.f. wi (m) irt ir.w n.f
r sḫpr wḏ.n.f. ir.w
rdi.n.f. wi r mniw t3 pn
rḫ.n.f. s3ḳ.w n.f sw (El-Adly, 1984:7:16-19)

He begat me to do what should be done for him
To achieve what he commanded to be done
He appointed me shepherd as of this land
For he knew him who would herd it for him

Moreover, he says, "I excel by acting for my Maker, pleasing God with what he gave." To act for and please his Maker is, of course, to speak and do Maat or again to "set Maat in the place of isfet."

2.2.2 The Declarations of Virtue

Certainly, a fundamental source of Maatian ethics is the rich array of autobiographical statements which are

called also Declarations of Virtue (DOV). The DOV, in spite of their evolution in the Old Kingdom in a context of regular and pervasive reference to the king, were nevertheless "a product of the personal or private domain" (Lichtheim, 1988:5). The Sitz im Leben of this genre of ethical literature is the private funerary practices and discourse which would eventually assume a structured form in the Declarations of Innocence (DOI) in the Book of Coming Forth By Day. In the DOV, the deceased left in the tomb or on stelae a self presentation for posterity which described an illustrious career and a praiseworthy moral personality.

Evolving from simply prayers for offerings and a good reception in Amenta, the land of the departed, the DOV expanded to include career data, moral self-presentation, warning against desecration of the tomb, an appeal to the living with the promise of reciprocal benefactions and even instructions as in the Late Period tomb of Petosiris (Lichtheim, 1992, 1988; Edel, 1981; Jansen-Winkeln, 1985; Otto, 1954).

J. Spiegel (1935:26) has called this genre of texts, an "Idealbiographie" and argues that they are essentially a portrait of an ideal righteous man, not a real record of an individual or his or her acts. Lichtheim (1975:4) asserts that the Virtues are essentially a "blending of the real with the ideal." For "with eternity the ever-present goal, it followed that neither a person's shortcomings nor the

ephemera of his life, were suitable matter for the autobiography." In fact, the Virtues "grew up in the shape of an epitaph and in quest for immortality." Thus, many appear "excessively self-laudatory," but are "an image designed for everlastingness," as Lichtheim states. They, like the Declarations of Innocence are real in that they are standards of moral excellence for self and society and therefore were like the Declarations, aspirations and standards as much as statements of virtues.

The earliest autobiographies or Declarations of Virtue appear in the 3rd Dynasty. One such autobiography is that of the provincial governor or nomarch, Metchen (*Mṯn*) (Urk. I:1-7). After reporting on receipt of his inheritance from his father, Metchen's autobiography is defined by its report of service and reward for service to the state or king. It is reflective of the early career autobiographies which stress state service and which did not yet contain explicit expressions of moral values. Although it becomes clear later that service to society through service to the king is, in fact, a central value and virtue. Thus, we read throughout the Virtues that the person did Maat for the king.

Here, it is important to note that there are two main interrelated themes in the autobiographies which serve as the most definitive discourse on Maat--social service and personal morality. Lichtheim, 1988:6) terms these themes "a

man's career and his moral personality." Also, Assmann (1989a:66) has noted these two themes in the autobiographies which he calls "Maat and career." He defines the career focus as service to the king and the Maat focus as service to the people and defines the ethics associated with the former as an "ethics of integration," i.e., social integration and the latter as an "ethics of distinction." Having claimed that in the Old Kingdom "Maat is the will of the king," he (1989a:33, 66) states that "it seems paradoxical that it would not be the career, that is to say, service to the king by which Maat is accomplished, but rather service to men." However, he states, "This is not a contradiction." For "in this period, there is no distinction between state and society; the king wishes (wills) that one serves man." For "he loves solidarity, because solidarity is the foundation of the state."

This, of course, is a purely political interpretation of the king's desire that officials serve the people. The missing moral dimension here is the king's will to do Maat, to do justice as he is commanded, and to create a moral community in which both Maat and the people flourish. Certainly, the texts make such claims and the self-definition of the king in choice of name and delineation of duty attest to this interest (Assmann, 1970; Kitchen, 1987). Thus, the texts say, "do Maat (justice) for the king, for Maat is what God wills. Speak Maat (truth) for the king, for what the

king wills (loves, desires) is Maat" (Urk. I:195.6-8); Edel, 1953, II:210ff). The king then is paralleled to God in his willing, desiring and loving (*mr*) Maat. It is again, then, a question of whether one simply calls these moral claims state "propaganda" and "myth" or seeks to explain the claims in terms of the stated motives and aspirations of the authors. Actually, one can "draw from" the texts in their own terms or "read into" the texts according to authorial inclination and capacity for substantiation. But as noted above, it is important to distinguish between the two. Moreover, my governing interest is in extracting the moral content of the texts, and thus, my reading of the texts will tend to stress this without denying the real and possible political ramifications of such claims.

Also in the communitarian theoretical framework in which this work is posed, there is a presumptive unity of the personal and the social, a dynamic unity of interactiveness as well as interrelatedness. Therefore one may concede a temporary suspension of that conceptual unity to achieve a more intimate and incisive understanding of a given item of study, but the unity is eventually reestablished in both a personal and social sense and thus, moral worthiness is based on both.

Advancing beyond mere professional service and beginning to add the ethical dimension to the autobiographical

narrative is the DOV of *Sḫm-ḫt-n-'nḫ* who served under King Sahure in the 5th Dynasty (Urk. I:38-40). He says:

> His Majesty said to the chief physician Sekhem-khet-n-ankh.
> As these nostrils enjoy health, as the divinities love me.
> May you depart to the grave
> after an advanced old age as one honored.
> I praised the king greatly
> and lauded every divinity for Sahure.
> For he knows the desire of all the attendants.
>
> When anything goes forth from the mouth of his Majesty
> it comes to pass immediately.
> For God has given him knowledge of things in the body,
> for he is more noble than any of the divinities.
> If you love Ra,
> you shall praise every divinity for Sahure
> who did this for me.
> I am his revered one.
> And never did I do anything evil to anyone.

Three things stand out here. First, the conception of the king as one whom God has given knowledge of things in the body and as one for whom one should praise the divinities, if one loves God, Ra. Secondly, the word *im3ḫw*, one honored, venerated and worthy has become an important concept in the moral vocabulary of Maatian ethics. This is seen as early as the 4th Dynasty in the narrative of Ikhi who defines himself as "a possessor of honor (worthiness) before the great God--*nb im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr '3*" (Urk. I:9.11).

In this same context, Debehen says, "things were done for him because he was worthy before his lord (Urk. I:21. 2). And *Ppi-'nḫ-ḥr-ib* later sums up the four fundamental areas in which one is to stand worthy, saying he was one

honored before the Great God, the king, the people and loved and praised by his family members (Urk. I:222.3-7). This concern with being (*im3ḫ*) is important in Maatian moral reasoning, for it is in essence a concern and claim of worthiness before God and people as will be discussed below in chapters VII and VIII. Assmann (1989a:65) states that "the term *im3hw* defines precisely the status of an owner of a tomb who is approved by public recognition and assured a permanent place in the social memory."

He (1989a:66) goes on to say that:

> During the Old Kingdom, there was always two roads which lead to the status of *im3hw* and through this survival after death: Maat and career. Each was indispensable. By one, one obtains affective integration in the social memory; by the other, one obtains the distinction of an important man.

In addition, it undergirded the quest and justified the claim of worthiness for eternal life. Thus one has already a beginning basis for a discourse on immortality in terms of its spiritual and social dimensions. Thirdly, in addition to stress on service to the king and concern for honor, *Sḫm-ḫt-n-ʿnḫ's* narrative ends with a clear disclaimer of wrongdoing. He says: "*n sp ir.i ḫt nbt dw r rmṯ nb* (I never did anything evil to any person)." This becomes a standard moral claim in the autobiographies and is the first disclaimer of wrongdoing in the Declarations of Innocence.

Also, Maatian ethics evolves with a stress on filial obligation. In a collection of narratives assembled by

Breasted (BAR, I:86.181.185), sons record that they have acted for their father and mother which by now was a critical ethical obligation. One Teti, overseer of the pyramid under Khafra (BAR, I:86.184; Urk. I:15), speaking of the tomb he built for his parents says: "he made (this) for his father and mother when they were both buried in the western highland." Although this deals simply with tomb building obligation, it represents a broader terrain of filial obligation of respect and care which will be expressed in an expanded way in the Virtues and Sebait.

As can be seen from the discussion above, elements of ancient Egyptian morality begin to appear in the literature of biographies before the word Maat itself is used. The earliest direct reference to Maat as a moral category in the Virtues occurs in the 5th Dynasty. This is attested to in the autobiography of the priest *Wr-hww* of Giza which offers a basic schema of early moral concerns and claims directly associated with the category Maat. He says:

pr(.i) m niwt(.i)
h3(.i) n m sp3t(.i)
ḏd.n(.i) m3ʿt im
ir.n(.i) m3ʿt im
\- - - - - - - - -
n sp ir(.i) šnnt rmṯ nb
n sp di(.i) sḏr s nb špt ir(.i) ḫr ḫt nb
ḏr mswt(.i)
ink sb(.i) ḥtpt
ir(.i) im3ḫw
mry it(.f) mry mwt.f
im3ḫw ḫr ntyw ḥnʿ.f
bnr ḫr snw.f
mry n b3kw.f
iwty sp ir.f šnnt rmṯ nb

I have come forth from my town
I have descended from my district
I spoke Maat there
I did Maat there
- - - - - - - - -

I never did what was harmful to any
    person
I never let anyone spend a night angry
    with me about a matter
Since I was born
I have attained peace.
I am an honored one
One loved by his father, beloved by his mother
One worthy before those with him
Kind to his sisters and brothers
Beloved of his servants
One who never did what was harmful to
    any person. (Urk. I:46.8ff)

The moral vocabulary used in this autobiography expresses a definite moral vision of human relations rooted in and reflective of Maat.

First of all one sees the importance of <u>location</u> in Maatian ethics, that is to day, the need to define oneself in terms of one's community. Doing Maat, then, is always concrete and contextual. One acts in a definite community called my town or my province or district and in relation to the people in it. It is in such a context of family, town and province that one proves one's worthiness or excellence (*iḳr*) and attains the status of *im3ḫw*, an honored one. Certainly, the greatest proof of worthiness is being able to claim, as the treasurer Neferyu, does in his declaration of virtue, "My entire town is my witness" (Hayes, 1990 I:fig. 82). Secondly, Maat is defined in terms of both speech and action with a constant and central dual stress in Maatian

discourse. Moreover, Wr-ḫww makes two other moral claims which will also appear repeatedly in the list of requisite virtues. These are: never doing anything which causes injury to others and never allowing another to remain angry with one overnight.

Expanding Maatian discourse, Seshem-nefer (Urk. I:57. 11f) offers the ground of Maatian moral practice by stating it is "What God, loves/wishes daily" (*mrrt nṯr r' nb*) and that "it is the Good" (*bw nfr pw*). The ground of Maat, then, is that it is divinely sanctioned and it is the Good. Seshem-nefer also cites as a Maatian virtue his telling the king what serves or is useful to the people (*3ḫ n rmṯ*). The category *3ḫ* is also a key Maatian category and has a range of meaning which includes serviceable, useful, fitting, and proper. This is used, then, not only to claim action of value to the people in general, but is also a central moral claim and requirement for filial responsibility.

In addition to stress on Maat as a practice in one's community and career, there are also texts where Maat appears, as in the Old Kingdom, as a moral claim to having obtained one's tomb by rightful means and treated the workers fairly who helped build them. Thus, *Ḥtp-ḥr-3ḫt* from Saqqara says:

> *ir.n(.i) is pw m išt(.i) m3'*
> *n sp iṯy(.i) ḫt nt rmṯ nb*
> *ir rmṯ nb wnw ir.sn n(.i) ḫt im*
> *ir.n.sn dw3.sn n.i nṯr ḥr.s '3 wrt*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *n sp iry(.i) ḫt nb m wsr r rmṯ nb*

mr nṯr ḫt m3'
ink im3ḫw ḫr niswt

I have made this tomb from my rightful
possessions
and I never took the property of anyone.
All persons who worked on it for me
worked praising God for me greatly.
- - - - - - - -
I never did anything by force against anyone.
As God loves a true thing
I am one honored before the king. (Urk. I:50.1f)

The provincial governor, Inti reaffirms that the moral importance of building a tomb by rightful means and ends asserting the ground of Maat in God's love/will. After declaring, then, that he had made his tomb by his rightful means (*m išt(.i) m3'*t) and that he did not take anyone else's property, he says:

ink im3ḫw ḫr niswt
ink im3ḫw ḫr nṯr '3
ink mr.f nfrt msḏ.f 3bt
mrrt nṯr pw irt ḫt m3'(t)

I am one honored before the king
I am one honored before the Great God
I am one who loves good and hates crookedness
What God desires is right-doing.

Thus, again Maat, in this case right-doing, *irt ḫt m3't*, is posited as the will of God. An interesting aspect of this grounding of Maat in the will of God is that it contrasts with the command ethics of various versions of Judaism and Christianity. Here, there is no commandment of God only knowledge and recognition of his will or what he loves and thus, the desire to do it so that, as the texts say, "I might stand well with the Great God" (Urk. I:123.2).

Breasted (1934:143) has pointed out that "After 3,000 B.C.E. the great men of the Old Kingdom began to discern the meaning of Maat in terms of their national experience." This essentially meant that:

> While not divested of its significance as a word designating personal qualities, it became in the minds of the Old Kingdom thinkers a term expressing a sense of the national order, the moral order of the nation, ...

Maat also is at the same time posited as a cosmic conception which was tied to a parallel interrelated concept of the role of the king in maintaining the social and cosmic order (Derchain, 1962). It is in this context of Maat as moral order that the chief judge in ancient Egyptian courts wore on his chest an image of Maat (Grdseloff, 1940). And as Breasted notes, "to indicate the winning litigant, the judge was accustomed to turn this symbol toward the winner as the two litigants stood before him" (Breasted, 1934:144).

It is also with this conception of Kemetic society as a moral order that Seshem-nefer, quoted above, stated that he gave the king advice that serves the people (*3ḫ m rmṯ*) and which was informed by Maat. This conception of Kemetic society as a moral community is also reflected in both the Middle Kingdom instructions to the prime minister, quoted above, as well as the definition of the role and qualities of the prime minister and other civil servants in the Sebait and DOV, such as that of Rekhmira, also quoted above. Another such description of a prime minister's moral qualities

and moral practice is found in the 6th Dynasty autobiography of the prime minister Kagemni, parts of which were restored by Edel (1981:210-226; Urk. I:194-196). Kagemni says:

> *sk nḫt-ib n ḥm.f r ḫt nb wḏt.n ḥm.f irt*
> *n mnḫ.n(.i) špss(.i) ḫr ḥm.f*
> *i - - ir bw m3ʿ n niswt*
> *m3ʿt mrrt nṯr*
> *ḏd bw m3ʿ n niswt*
> *mrrt niswt m3ʿt*
> *i - -im.ṯn ḏd n.f is ḫt r.i ḏw.n niswt m grg*
> *ḏr wnt ity rḫ ḳd(.i) sšm(.i,*
> *nḫt ib n ḥm.f r(.i) r sr.f nb - - -*
> *ink ḏd m3ʿ wḥm nfr*
> *m ḫt mrrt niswt*
> *i mr(.i) nfr n(.i) im*
> *ḫr niswt ḫr nṯr ʿ3* (Urk. I:195)

> His Majesty relied on all that his majesty
> ordered done,
> For I was worthy and greatly respected by
> his Majesty
> O you - - do Maat for the king
> The Maat which God loves
> Speak Maat for the king
> (For) What the king loves is Maat
>
> O you - - do not speak evil against me to the
> king through lies
> For the sovereign knows my character and conduct
> His Majesty relies on me more than all his
> officials . . . .
> I was one who spoke truly and reported good
> In the way the king loves
> For I wished to stand well
> with the king and with the Great God.

Several things stand out in this text. First, there is the frequency with which the category Maat, its alternative abstract form, *bw m3ʿt*, and its adjectival form, *m3ʿ* appear. Lichtheim (1992:13) believes this frequency of stress on Maat is due to the fact that Kagemni was prime minister and chief judge. This is so and reflects again Breasted's (1934:145) contention that moving from the individual, family and

immediate community sphere, Maat "gradually passed into a larger arena as the spirit and method of a national guidance and control of human affairs, a control in which orderly administration is suffused with moral conviction." This, of course, was argued above in the section on "Civil Service and Social Ethics." Secondly, Kagemni, in reaffirming the ground for Maat as what God loves/wishes, *mrrt nṯr*, reaffirms at the same time the king's and thus society's commitment to Maatian administration by asserting that Maat is also what the king loves/ wishes, *mrrt niswt*.

Thirdly, Kagemni introduces an expanded moral vocabulary. In addition to other moral categories already cited, he speaks of himself as *mnḫ*, worthy and *špss*, greatly respected. Lichtheim (1992:12) translates *špss* as "valued." But Faulkner (1981:265) allows for "greatly respected" by listing "well-esteemed" as one possible meaning. The stress here is on moral excellence--*iḳr* or *mnḫ*--which is also moral worthiness and which was in ancient Maatian ethics and remains in modern Maatian ethics as a key moral category as explained in Chapter VII. Kagemni also introduces the words *ḳd*--character, and *sšm*--conduct, which expand in use in the Middle Kingdom and continues as an important moral category.

Finally, Kagemni says he practiced Maat because he wished "to stand well with the king and with the Great God." The phrase is again a stress on worthiness, a desire to be morally worthy before one's family, community, nation and

God. And this refers us back to the concepts of *im3ḫw*, *iḳr*, and *mnḫ*. Lichtheim, 1975:4-5) has noted that in the 6th Dynasty the DOV yield an expansion "that bespoke the new ability to capture the formless experiences of life in the enduring formulations of the spoken word." The Inscription of Nefer-Seshem-Ra, called Sheshi is paradigmatic of such autobiographical expression. He states:

pr.n(.i) m niwt(.i) h3.n(.i) sp3t(.i)
ir.n(.i) m3ʿt n nb.s
sḫtp.n(.i) sw m mrrt.f
ḏd.n m3ʿ ir.n(.i) m3ʿt
ḏd.n(.i) nfr wḥm.n(.i) nfr
iṯi.n(.i) tp-nfr mr(.i) nfr im rmṯ
wp.n(.i) snnw r ḥtp.sn
nḥm.n(.i) m3r mʿ wsr r.f sḫmt.n(.i) im
rdi.n(.i) t n ḥḳr ḥbs (n ḥ3y) sm3.i
t3 m iwi
ḳrs.n(.i) iwty s3.f
ir.n(.i) mḫnt n iwty mḫnt.f
snḏ.n(.i) it im3.n(.i) n mwt
šd.n(.i) ẖrdw.sn

I have come forth from my town
I have descended from my district
I have done Maat for its lord
I have satisfied him with what he loves
I spoke truly, I did Maat
I spoke good. I repeated good
I seized the right moment
so as to stand well with the people
I judged between two so as to satisfy them
I rescued the weak from one stronger than he
as much as was in my power
I gave bread to the hungry, clothes (to the naked),
I brought the boatless to land
I buried him who had no son
I made a boat for one who had none
I respected my father, I pleased my mother
I raised their children. (Urk. I:198.13-199.7)

In the 6th Dynasty, Weni, Governor of Upper Egypt (Urk. I:98-100), still stresses his relation with the king. He says that his placement was because "I was worthy in his

majesty's heart." But he also stresses his own moral worthiness, saying, his position as "commander" of the army and overseer of the royal tenants was "because of my rectitude" (*mt-n-st*) and that he acted "so that no one attacked his fellow, so that no one seized a loaf or sandals from a traveler, so that no one took a cloth from any town, so that no one took a goat from anyone." He then returns to the king as the grounding for his evaluation, saying "I governed Upper Egypt for him in peace, so that no one attacked his fellow. I acted throughout so that His Majesty praised me for it." But again his references are not exclusively to the king. And he ends his Declaration of Virtue by grounding his moral claims in being "one beloved of his father, praised by his mother, and gracious to his sisters and brothers."

Harkhuf, Count and Governor of Upper Egypt (Urk. I:120-131) likewise defines himself by locating himself and then, in great part by his service to society through the king saying he is one "who does what his lord praises." And he records a letter of commendation sent to him by the king in which the king says "Truly you spend day and night planning to do what your lord loves, praises and commands." However, Harkhuf in addition to grounding his claims of worthiness in service to the king, also lists other virtues of being worthy. Thus, he says:

ii.n(.i) min m niwt.(.i)
h3.n(.i) m sp3t

ḳd.n(.i) pr
s'ḥ' '3w.f
š3d.n(.i) s
srd nhwt
ḥs.n wi niswt
ir.n n.i it(i) imt.pr
ink iḳr
(mry) n it(.f)
ḥsy n mwt.f
mrrw snw.f nb
iw rdi.n(.i) t n ḥḳr
hbs n ḥ3y
sm3.n.(.i) t3 m iwty mẖnt.f
\- - - - - - - -
ink ḏd(.i) nfr wḥm mrrt
n sp ḏd(.i) ḫt nb ḏw n sḫm ir.f
r s nb
mr.n(.i) nfr rn ḫr nṯr '3
n (sp wḏ' snn snw)
m sp sšwy s3 m ẖrt it.f

I have come here from my city
I have descended from my district
I have built a house, set up (its) doors
I have dug a pool and planted sycamores
The king praised me
My father made a will for me
I was one worthy
One beloved of his father
Praised by his mother
and one whom all his brothers and
sisters loved
I gave bread to the hungry
clothes to the naked
and brought the boatless to dry land
\- - - - - - - -
I was one who spoke good and repeated
what was loved
And I never spoke anything evil against any
person to his superior
For I wished to stand well with the Great God
(literally, that my name be good before
the Great God)

I (never judged between two contestants)
In a manner which deprived a son of his
father's property

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this Declaration of Virtue is the clear absence of the noun Maat or its adjecti-

val forms. However, as Lichtheim (1992:14) asserts "when the main features of right-doing had been established, a man could present his moral self-portrait without mentioning (the word) Maat, the underlying moral principle." Thus, Harkhuf does not mention the word Maat, but he gives a moral self-presentation which in essence is Maat and thus the word itself is not necessary. All of his basic moral claims are fundamental to the concept and practice of Maat--location, worthiness before God, king, community and family, sensitivity to and care for the vulnerable, good speech, honesty, justice and the moral desire to stand well with the Great God.

Thus Harkhuf reflects a practice prevalent in the First Intermediate Period and which occurs in varying degrees in other periods in which a moral self-portrait does not contain the word Maat but still retains and expands its fundamental concepts. This observation is important because it raises questions about the contention that the absence of the category Maat in Late Period texts indicated Maat was no longer an ethical idea (Assmann, 1984a, 1989a, 1990). Both Lichtheim (1992) and Teeter (1991) have challenged this view and it will be discussed below.

The autobiography of Harkhuf, which is perhaps the most famous of the Old Kingdom, contains a narrative of interaction with the king that marks a important change in self-presentation and perhaps self-understanding. Loprieno (1990)

observes that in addition to the text's relevance concerning moral practice, it is also important morally and socially in that it reflects a fundamental change in how the king is approached and viewed; and this has implications for both ethics and theology. In this text, he states, "the king appears as a human person. He is called 'his Majesty,' not King of Upper and Lower Egypt." The word for majesty is *hm* which indicates both a "physical body" and "servant." Moreover, "there is a moment in which the individual Harkhuf is able to make the king happy and thus associate himself with the king." This and similar literature suggests that now "doors are open for individuals to get things that were formerly reserved only for the king including immortality of the soul (*ba*)." It is, one can conclude, a beginning expression of personal consciousness that will flower in literature in the First Intermediate Period and reach a classical height in the Middle Kingdom.

2.2.3 The Sebait

The Sebait or Instructions contribute to the conceptual development of Maat, both in terms of broad concept generation and expansion of the number of categories by which the Maatian project and its opposite are defined. The earliest Sebait which is that of Hardjedef and which is possibly from the 5th Dynasty is incomplete and does not in the current form mention the word Maat (Posener, 1952). It does, however, suggest a counsel of moral purity by saying "cleanse

yourself before your (own) eyes. Lest another cleanse you." The Sebait of Kagemni, perhaps of the 6th Dynasty, is also fragmentary (Gardiner, 1946). Moreover, it too does not mention the word Maat. But it does provide some important moral categories in Maatian ethics.

These categories include the respectful man (*sn<u>d</u>w*), the straight forward person (*mt[y]*), the silent or self-controlled person (*grw*) and one pleasant in speech (*hr-m-mdw*). Gardiner (1946:74) asserts that the first four words" . . . all have a privative implication--lack of overboldness, of exceeding the norm, of talkativeness and of discontent." However, there is not sufficient evidence to conclude this is against discontent. Furthermore, the use of the category "privative" fails to see these virtues as virtues of moral self-discipline and self-cultivation rather than simply coercive values imposed by an oppressive society. A more fruitful approach would seek to view and explain these values in their own context and in terms of their moral meaning to adherents.

Clearly, the Sebait of Ptahhotep is the definitive Sebait on Maat in the Old Kingdom (Zába, 1956; Jequier, 1911; Devaud, 1916). Dating from the 6th Dynasty, it provides us with an important description of Maat, in fact, a central and inclusive book on the Maatian project. Its length and variousness prohibits a full treatment here of its contribution to the concept and practice of Maat. Thus,

I will focus essentially on Ptahhotep's direct references to Maat. I will, however, point out that Ptahhotep teaches many basic virtues of Maat. Among these are cultivation of character, self-control, balance, generosity, kindness, hearing, reciprocity, propriety, harmony, order, and of course, truth and justice.

As prime minister, he is clearly concerned with leadership as a moral vocation and thus, his advice is directed toward cultivation of this kind of leadership. Addressing the question of Maatian leadership, he says:

> *ir wnn.k m sšmy*
> *ḥr wḏw n sḫrw n ‘s3t*
> *ḥḥ.n.k sp nb mnḫ*
> *r wnt sḫr.k nn iw im.f*
> *wr (3ḫ) m3‘t w3ḥ spd*
> *n ẖnnt.s ḏr rk ir sy*
> *iw ẖsf.tw n sw3 ḥr hpw*
> *sw3t pw m ḥr ‘wn-ib*
> *in nḏyt iṯ.t ‘ḥ‘*
> *n p3 ḏ3yt mni sp.s*
> *wn pḫwy m3‘t w3ḥ.f*
> *ḏdw s w it.i pw* (Ptahhotep, 84-94, 97-98)
>
> If you are a leader
> who governs the affairs of the many
> seek every excellent deed
> so that your conduct may be blameless.
> For Maat is great it endures
>   and is effective.
> It has not been disturbed since the
>   time it was created.
> One punishes the violator of the laws
> (But) this passes by the greedy.
> Although baseness may seize wealth
> wrongdoing has never brought
>   its goods to (a safe) port.
> In the end it is Maat which lasts
> And a man says it is the ground of my father.

This passage points to Ptahhotep's desire to establish the ground of Maat by delineating its origin, value and durabi-

lity. It also serves as a way to define Maat's positiveness and then contrasts it with some of its opposite concepts and practice. In passage (88, L2) Ptahhotep also uses the category *3ḫ*--effective, good, fitting, useful, valuable--to describe Maat. Stressing Maat's role in the length of time a person lives--physically and in the social memory--Ptahhotep states:

w3ḥ s 'ḳ3 m3't
šm.f r nmtt.f
iw.f ir.f imt-pr im
nn wn(.f) is 'wn-ib (Ptahhotep, 312-315)

Enduring (established) is the man whose
standard is Maat
Who walks according to its way
He will make a will by it
But the greedy will not have a grave.

Fecht (1958) has dealt with this problematic of greed and the ephemerality of ill-gotten gains in the Sebait of Ptahhotep, arguing that such behavior is posed as an offense punished in this world and/or the next, as is discussed below in Chapter IV. He argues that Ptahhotep introduces an early form of the idea of judgment in which evil not dealt with in this life is dealt with in the afterlife. He also interprets ethical behavior as the essential basis for long life in this world and continued existence in the afterlife.

Ptahhotep mentions Maat again in the context of advice concerning the need for leaders to be moral exemplars. He also reaffirms the life-giving power of Maat, saying:

ir bi m rdi 'ḏt
srwḏ m3't 'nḫ msw (596-597)

Set a good example; don't offend
If Maat is sustained, your children will live.

Ptahhotep also refers to Maat in his advice on truthful and restrained speech saying, "*nḏr m3ʿt m sni.s*--hold fast to the truth; do not exceed it" (151). Moreover, he describes the wise and great as one who does Maat and is free of falsehood--*irr(w) m3ʿt šw grg*" (532).

Ptahhotep also makes another reference to Maat in defining the good son. He says:

Lo the good son is a gift of God
One who does more than what was told
to him by his lord,
He will do Maat and his heart will act
according to his course. (633-637)

Furthermore, Ptahhotep notes, concerning his teachings, that "It is in their Maat (truth) that their value lies--*ir sp n m3ʿt iry špss.sn pw*" (509). Ptahhotep concludes his teachings by saying that he has lived 110 years and received honors exceeding those of the ancestors "by doing Maat for the king until the state of veneration." Thus, Ptahhotep has posed Maat as a primordial unchangeable principle which brings rewards to the righteous and punishment to those who violate its laws. This conception lasts in essentially the same form until the New Kingdom when it begins to be affected by an emerging strong concept of an intervening God (Brunner, 1963).

In summary, then, in the Old Kingdom, in which the basis for Maatian ethics was established, several things occur. First, Maat is established as a moral order with

divine, natural and social dimensions. Secondly, Maat is counterposed with *isft* (evil, chaos, wrong-doing) as well as with *ḏw* (evil), *grg* (falsehood) and *3bt* (wrong-doing). Thirdly, Maat is a standard and measure of both moral life on the personal and social level. Fourthly, Maat is tied to the concept of moral and social excellence (*iḳr, mnḫ*) and resultant worthiness (*im3ḫ*). Finally, the ground of Maat is that it's God's will, and thus the king's will and that it is good, effective and life-giving.

2.3 Maat in the First Intermediate Period

The divisions between the Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom are not clear ruptures. Rather, each period develops and flows into the other and overlaps, leaving no neat categories of time or events at the point of encounter. By the Sixth Dynasty evidence of the political and literary changes which culminate in the First Intermediate Period have already begun to emerge (Grimal, 1992: Chapter 6). Likewise, the literature of the First Intermediate Period, prefigures and contributes to the flowering witnessed in the Middle Kingdom (Clére and Vandier, 1982: Schenkel, 1965; Dunham, 1937; Brunner, 1937). Still for the convenience of discussion of the development of Maatian moral discourse, such periodization has its utility, especially if one recognizes its limitation and overlapping.

The First Intermediate Period of 150 years yield a huge number of literary texts on problems, changes and possibilities during this period. Texts dated from this period and the Middle Kingdom show evidence of provincial rulers increasing independence and years of famine which create huge problems (Vandier, 1936). There is progressive weakening of royal authority which corresponds to a parallel ascendancy of officials and an expanding administrative system (Daneri de Rodrigo, 1992; Gomaa, 1980; Kanawati, 1977). Thus, the stress and strain on the system led to important changes in terms of both decentralization and a context more conducive to expanded development in various areas.

It has been well-argued that gradual disintegration of the Old Kingdom unleashed centripetal forces which allowed for greater personal expression and freedom. As Assmann (1990:55) has observed, a fundamental characteristic of Maatian discourse in the Old Kingdom is that there appears to be, at least formally, an implicit "Selbstverstandlichkeit" attached to Maat. Thus:

> Sie wird nicht in Frage festellt und daher auch nicht 'thematisiert.' Jeder weiß was die Ma'at ist. Es besteht kein kommunikatives Bedürfnis, sich daruber zu verstandigen.

For him, the fall of the Old Kingdom sets in motion "critical reflection and communication" and the emergent new life is as "ein befreites Aufatmen." The move is from a monopoly of initiative by the king in the literature to the emergence

of individual breakthrough. Maat, then, becomes open to discourse. As Assmann argues, "L'évidence naturelle de la Maat, incorporée dans le roi s'est decomposé. La Maat, devenue problématique, devient thématisable." What evolves, then, is a more expansive discourse on Maat.

Therefore, in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, we encounter an expanded discourse on virtue and a new vocabulary to project this new vision of human moral conduct. Assmann (1989a:68) points out that there is a move from stress on the monument as a memorial to one on virtue or character. Therefore, he notes that "It is virtue alone which counts. Thus Maat becomes a means of 'spiritual monumentalization'." In this regard, Kheti advises his son, Merikara, saying:

> *m ḏw nfr wḥ3-ib*
> *swḥ3 mnw.k m mrwt.k* (36-37)
>
> Do not be evil for kindness is good.
> Make your monument endure through
> love of you.

Thus, it is love of the people engendered by the Maatian behavior of the ruler that causes memory of him to endure. Also in this period, there is a clear expansion of the moral vocabulary centered on character and worthiness (Lichtheim, 1992:20ff; 1988:21ff).

In this context of fluidity and possibility, the thematization of Maat not only emerges, but becomes inclusive. As Lichtheim (1988:142) notes:

> All sections of the population--the rich, the poor, the rising middle class, now erect tombs and memorial stones with self-presentations designed to secure a share in immortality.

And undergirding this quest for immortality is the living of a Maatian life.

2.3.1 The Declarations of Virtue (DOV)

The autobiographies in the First Intermediate Period maintain and expand the fundamental understanding and expression of Maatian moral concepts. However, as pointed out above, autobiographies of this period rarely use Maat as a category of moral reference. However, Maatian moral concepts and practices are reaffirmed and expanded. Moreover, the category Maat is still used as in the autobiography of the stewart Tchebu who says:

> *iw ir.n.(i) imi-r3 pr n ḥk3 6*
> *n sp iwt ẖt im*
> *ink ir m3ʿt sb n im3ḫ* (TTP:3.3.7)
>
> I served as steward for six rulers
> without incurring blame
> I did Maat and achieved worthiness.

Maatian ethics evolve in this period in the context of instability and deprivation. It thus reflects the context in its concern with care and responsibility for the vulnerable, protection of human life and reestablishing moral and political community. The nomarch Henu's DOV is definitive of this period (Urk. I:76-79). He begins by declaring not simply that he is loved and praised by his own mother and father but rather "I am one worthy, beloved of fathers praised of mothers." This love and praise are based on the

fact that he "released your youths from the tow-rope . . .no daughter of yours was made to work by coercion" nor was "her arms pressed against me" and "I did not put fetters on any man." This he did to rebuild moral community after disruption. Moreover, in the midst of hunger and even famine, he states, "I gave bread and beer to all the hungry . . .and clothed the naked." Likewise, "those who had been servants I made their positions into those of officials." He concludes with a declaration of virtues established during the Old Kingdom saying that he did not "deprive another of his property or slander a man to his superior;" that he "spoke and repeated the Good" and was beloved and praised by his family as well as "excellent of character" (*mnḫ ḳd*) to them.

Again, the moral claims reflect a need to reestablish political and moral community and to care for the vulnerable affected by political and natural developments. Thus, the nomarch Antifi (Vandier, 1950:171.3) defines himself as a defender and servant of the people saying, "I am the vanguard and the rearguard of the people (*ink ḥ3t rmṯ pḥwy rmṯ*) . . .and as for anyone on whom I placed my hand, no misfortune ever came to him." Furthermore, to build both political and moral community, he states, "I made a man embrace the slayer of his father, the slayer of his brother . . . ." For he said "I would not permit the heat of discord in (the district) after the suppression of all evil

dispositions (*ḳdw nb ḏw*) which the people hate." The nomarch Kheti I (Griffith, 1889: pl.15) and the treasurer Iti of Imyotru (Schenkel, 1965:57-58.39) also speak to this call for and claim of moral and political leadership to reestablish and protect the community, and respect and sustain the vulnerable.

Similarities and differences are evident between the Declarations of Virtue of the First Intermediate Period and those of the Old Kingdom. In addition to focus on communal restoration, other differences merit mention. The first is the introduction of the concept that the performance of Maat in community was indeed the offering of Maat to God himself. Lichtheim (1992:21) notes that:

> When in temples of the New Kingdom and Late Period the king is shown performing the act of offering Maat, the scene depicts what had been conceived a thousand years earlier by men who practiced self-reliance and initiative undirected by royal command; it was the man of standing who raised up Maat to the deity.

Thus, *Mn-'nḫ-ppy* called Mni (Urk. I:269.9) says that he rescued the weak from the powerful, and spoke what the great loved and masses praised. Then, he says:

> *[ḏd.n(.i)] m3' n mrwt si't m3't n [nb.s]*.
> [I spoke] truly so as to raise up Maat
> to [its lord].

Sn-ndisw-i makes a similar moral claim saying:

> *ḏd.n(.i) mrrt '3w ḥsst nḏsw*
> *n mrwt s(i)'t m3't n nṯr '3 nb pt*
> (Petrie, 1900: pl.ix)
>
> I spoke what the great loved and the
> masses praised,

in order to raise Maat up to the Great
God, lord of heaven.

Thus, offering Maat to God is posed early as a social practice first and later emerges also as a central ritual as depicted in iconographic evidence in the New Kingdom and Late Period (Teeter, 1990).

A second development in the First Intermediate Period is the introduction of the declaration: "*ir.n.(i) mrrt rmṯ ḥsst nṯrw*"--I did what the people loved and the divinities praised" as a central Maatian moral conception. This follows the statement of location, i.e., grounding in community. Thus, Kheti (Edel, 1984:96ff) says:

iy.n(.i) m niwt(.i)
h3.n(.i) m sp3t(.i)
ir.n(.i) mrrt rmṯ ḥsst nṯrw
iw rdi.n(.i) t n ḥkr hbsw n ḥ3y
sḏm.n(.i) sprt n ẖ3rt
di.n(.i) pr n nmḥw
wḏb.n(.i) s3(.i) n mrr grg
n wḏ'(.i) iwty sp.f r ṯs.f
wšb.n(.i) bin m nfr
n ḏ'r(.i) bw ḏwy
n mrwt w3ḥ tp t3
sbt r im3ḫ

I have come from my town
I have descended from my nome
I have done what people love and
divinities praise
I gave bread to the hungry, clothes to
the naked.
I listened to the appeal of the widow.
I gave a home to the orphan
I turned my back on the lover of lies
And I did not judge the blameless by
his (i.e., the liar's) word
I answered evil with good
And I did not seek after wickedness
So that I might endure on earth
And achieve worthiness.

This text clearly contains moral concerns and claims rooted in the morality of the Old Kingdom. It includes location, sensitivity to and care for the vulnerable, rejection of evil and falsehood and the quest for endurance and worthiness (*im3ḫ*). Even the definition of Maat as "what people love and the deities praise" is in part reflective of Maat-thinking in the Old Kingdom which stresses making oneself beloved and doing the divine will.

What is new in this text, however, is the declaration that "I answered evil with good." At first glance, this seems to pose a significant challenge to the fundamental Maatian principle of reciprocity which in most cases promises "a like response." As King Kheti says in his famous Sebait of this period:

> *ḏb3.tw sḫ(t) m mity.f*
> *mḏdt pw irt nbt* (123)
>
> A blow is repaid by its like
> To every action there is a (similar) response.

Or again as Ptahhotep (312-315) says, there is long life for the Maatian person, but not even a grave for the wrongdoer.

However, on second look, one can read the virtue of answering evil with good as another expression of the fundamental Maatian principle of replacing *isfet* with Maat or in its original form "putting Maat in the place of *isfet*." Thus, one does not give good to evil or as in Christianity, do good for evil. Rather one answers (*wšb*) or responds to evil by doing a good, i.e., Maat, which replaces

and destroys evil. The distinction here is an important one, for the intent is not to reward evil by giving what is not deserved but to create a new moral context by replacing evil with Maat, (*rdit m3ʿt m st isft*). In a word, the Maatian tradition requires a response that includes doing good and eliminating evil, and answering evil with good fits into this process.

Another important development in this period is the stress on character, both the moral desire to be a person of character and the moral claim to be a possessor of it. The ruler Indi (Hayes, 1990 I:141.84) says, "I ruled Thinis with a desire for a good character (*ḳdw*) and with a desire to do things well." Ipi, the King's Gentleman, says "*ink ir ḳd.f* --I am one who made his character" (Hodash and Berlev, 1982: 60) and Kheti I says, "I am upright of character (*ʿḳ3 bi3t*)" (Griffith, 1889: pl. 15). Here one finds an emergent discourse on character which will flourish in the Middle Kingdom and be a fundamental and recurring element in the definition of the Maatian person.

Also in the First Intermediate Period, as Lichtheim (1992:22-23) notes, Maat remains a central feature of public service and one's self-description of character is even more "integrated with the career narration so that the distinction between the two aspects of autobiography was effaced." Thus, Neni the high priestess of Hathor defines herself as "one worthy before the divinities . . ., one praised by her

husband and a great priestess of excellent character (*nfr ḳd*) (Dunham, 1937: p. xvi, 1). Likewise, the Count Indi tends to link his claim of being an excellent citizen (*nds iḳr*) with his being one loved by his parents and siblings and his relations (Dunham, 1937:92-94.pl. xxviii, 2). There is also no separation between self-description of his character and his excellence in public service by the butler, Merer of Edfu in his autobiographical presentation (Schenkel, 1965:62-64.no.42). Thus, he says:

> I did what the great ones liked, and what my household praised
> A person beloved of his companions
> I stood out in front. I have achieved worthiness.
> - - - - - - - -
> Never did I hand a person over to a potentate so that my name might be good with all people. I never lied against any person . . . . When fear had arisen in another town, this town was praised . . . . I nourished my brothers and sisters. I buried the dead and nourished the living, wherever I went in this drought which occurred. I gave . . .white barley and . . .hmi--barley and measured (it) out for every man according to his wish.

And finally the treasurer Iti (Schenkel, 1965:57-58.39) says he "was a worthy citizen who acted with his arm" and "serve a great lord and . . .a small lord without fault being found of him." And he reports "people said 'he is free of robbing others'" (BAR I:457-459). He also states that he was "a great pillar in the Theban district, a man of respect in the Southland," one who did not exploit women nor the people in general. Thus, public service is informed by the concept of leadership as a moral vocation as discussed above. And each

person seeks to establish in his declaration of virtue evidence of his worthiness as both a person and public servant.

In conclusion, as Lichtheim (1992:32) states, the self-presentations of the First Intermediate Period

> show that the basic meanings of Maat-Right-Justice--are the same as they were in the 6th Dynasty. What has been added is a great advance in thinking about experiences and formulating conclusions.

Thus, two things occurred. First, "the range of actions defined as Maat was enlarged," and secondly, "the ability to perform the works of Maat was now seen as grounded in character." And as noted above, this stress on character develops even more in the Middle Kingdom.

2.3.2 The Sebait

In the Instruction of King Kheti for his son Merikara, there are several direct references to Maat which contribute to the delineation of Maat in the First Intermediate Period (Golenischeff, 1916: pls.ix-xiv; Pirenne, 1938; Volten, 1945:3-81, pl. 104; Helck, 1977). The first encounter with an adjectival or participial form of Maat is in the context of Kheti's stress on the need for justice. He says:

> May you be justified (*sm3' ḫrw*) before God
> That one may say (even in) your (absence)
> That you punish in accordance (with the crime).
> Good character is a man's heaven
> But the vilification of the angry is painful. (30-31)

This stress on justification, however, is not simply in the sense of being just but also in the sense of living a

Maatian life that would justify immortality. It is in this Sebait that the concept of judgment is most clearly delineated (Merikara, 53-57).

Secondly, Maat is posed as a possession of the sage or wise person which comes to him distilled like the sayings of the ancestors. The text says:

> *iw n.f. m3't 'tḫ-ti*
> *mi sḫrw n ḏdt tpw-'w*
>
> Maat comes to him in its pure essence
> like the condition of the sayings of
> the ancestors. (Merikara, 34-35)

Maat here is linked with two main elements, wisdom and tradition. Wisdom or knowledge, as argued below, is an ethical requirement. Here Maat is said to come to a wise person (*s33*) in its purse essence. Hence, the value, indeed the imperative, of knowing is linked with piety and wisdom throughout Maatian ethics. Also, tradition is a central emphasis here as evidenced by the following verses which say:

> Emulate your fathers, your ancestors
> For lo, their words endure in books
> Open them, read them and emulate their
> knowledge.
> For one who is taught becomes skilled.
> (Merikara, 35-36)

The call for emulation here suggests that the ancestors are rooted in the moral knowledge of Maat, as the above passage notes. And it is in this context of moral grounding that they are worthy of emulation.

The category Maat is next raised in the context of a discussion on preventing corruption by providing for officials so that they will act by the laws. Thus, Kheti says:

s'3 wrw.k ir.sn hpw.k
nn nm'.n ḫwd m pr.f
nb ḫt pw tm g3w
n ḏd.n sw3 m m3't.f
n.'ḳ3 ḏd ḥ3.n.i
nm'.f n nb ḏb3w.f (Merikara, 42-44)

Advance your officials that they may
uphold your laws
One who has wealth at home is not partial
Being rich he has no need
(However) the poor man does not speak
according to his Maat
Not straightforward is one who says
"Would that I had"
He is partial toward one who pays him.

This is a recognition that there is a material aspect to social morality. It is not that riches will automatically forestall corruption. Likewise, being poor does not mean that one is ipso facto vulnerable to corruption. What is indicated here is that conditions shape consciousness. Given this, as a general rule, one is less vulnerable to bribes if one has wealth. And also as a general rule, one whose life is marked by poverty and seeking wealth is vulnerable to the temptation not to act or speak "according to his Maat." Maat, then, is available to all, but one must in the final analysis build the moral community in which one wants to live. And Kheti is arguing for a civil service not impoverished and vulnerable to corruption and bribes in order to end their disadvantaged condition.

It should be noted that this discussion is not about the masses and this is not an assumption about the morality of the poor. That is another problematic of Maatian ethics which, like most ethics of religions of yesterday and today, was concerned more with sensitivity to and care for the poor than with ending their poverty. Modern Maatian ethics, building on the inherent possibilities of Maat, argue that the concern for the poor and vulnerable must in the final analysis lead to the end of poverty and other conditions of vulnerability and disadvantage. Otherwise, morality is reductively translated as little more than noblesse oblige.

In Kheti's next reference to Maat as a moral category, he seeks to encourage conduct which is both respect-engendering and fitting for a ruler. Thus he says:

> *ḏd m3ʿt m pr.k*
> *snḏ n.k wrw ntyw ḥr t3*
> *mty n nb ʿḳ3-ib*
> *in ḫnt dd šnḏ n s3 pr* (45-46)
>
> Speak truth in your house
> That the princes of the earth may respect
> Uprightness is fitting for a ruler
> Indeed the front of the house puts respect
> in the back of the house.

Also, he reaffirms the Old Kingdom teaching that Maat means enduring on earth. He, then, outlines some of the basic moral concerns of governance, saying:

> *ir m3ʿt w3ḥ.k tp t3*
> *sgr rmw m m3r ḫ3rt*
> *m ns s ḥr ḫt it.f*
> *m ḥd wrw hr išt.sn*
> *s3w.ti ḥr ḫsf m nf*
> *m sʿrḳ nn št 3ḫ n.k*
> *iw t3 pn r grg ḫr.s* (46-49)

> Do Maat that you endure upon the earth
> Quiet the weeper and do not oppress the widow
> Do not drive a man from the property of
>   his father
> Do not reduce the possession of the nobles
> Guard against punishing wrongly
> Do not kill; it does not serve you
> Thus will this land be set in order.

Good rule, then, is a rule of care for the vulnerable, justice, respect for life and as mentioned above, truthfulness and uprightness, in a word, a Maatian order.

Finally, King Kheti uses Maat in his concluding instruction to his son Merikara to argue that Maat is the most valuable and enduring monument. As pointed out above, this and other similar discourse represent a greater spiritualization of monument building as distinct from the Old Kingdom where the physical monument was stressed to a greater degree within the discourse on endurance and immortality (Breasted, 1934:160). Kheti also stresses the morality and spirituality of virtue over ritual, saying:

> *siḳr ḥwt.k nt imnt*
> *smnḫ ṡt.k nt ẖrt-nṯr*
> *m ‘ḳ3 m irt m3‘t*
> *rhnṫ ib.sn pw ḥr.s*
> *šsp bit nt ‘ḳ3-ib*
> *r iw3 n ir isft* (127-129)

> Make excellent your house in the West
> Embellish your place in the graveyard
> by being upright and doing Maat
> For it is what the hearts of people rely on
> More acceptable is the virtue of the upright
> than the ox of the wrongdoer.

Here, then, is the core of Maat-teaching which is applied to both king and the ordinary person. Maat is posed here first in terms of justice and then as moral wisdom

distilled in the teaching of the ancestors, as truth-telling, as the ground of endurance on earth and immortality in heaven, as care for the vulnerable, uprightness, as that which the hearts of people rely and finally as virtue more acceptable than ritual.

2.4 Maat in the Middle Kingdom

2.4.1 The Coffin Texts

One of the most important corpus of texts in Kemetic religion is the Coffin Texts (The Book of Vindication) (De Buck, 1935-1961; Altenmüller, 1975; Faulkner, 1973-1978). Although these texts increase in use in the Middle Kingdom, some "were probably copied for wealthy common folk as early as the Old Kingdom . . ." (Lesko, 1991:101). Still, however, the Coffin Texts are seen as a central body of texts in the so-called democratization of mortuary practices and in some cases beliefs. This, of course, refers to the appropriation of the body of texts originally apparently reserved for the king and the use of them by the masses. But as Lesko (1991: 101) notes, "there is no reason to believe that all religion before the First Intermediate Period centered on them, as many scholars have claimed . . . ."

These texts, called the Book of Vindication by the ancient Egyptians, derive their name in Egyptology from reference to the practice by private persons of inscribing inside coffins some of the Pyramid Texts and other texts which incorporated various general and non-royal traditions.

These texts would in turn be expanded on and passed on to the New Kingdom and beyond in the Book of Coming Forth By Day. In the case of Coming Forth, the practice was to write the texts on a papyrus roll and placed it in the coffin of the deceased.

In addition to their representing an increased participation in mortuary practices by the masses, the Coffin Texts also are a central source of reference to Maat and the concepts of justification and judgment which surround this central ethical ideal (Greishammer, 1970). Of course, the texts are also of great significance as the source of the concept of free will, equality and shared resources of nature which are posed in CT 1130 and which will be discussed in turn below in Chapter VI and VII. Finally, the Coffin Texts are important in their providing a literature on the Ba which allows everyone to possess one as distinct from the Pyramid Texts which show it as exclusively an anthropological attribution of the king (Žabkar, 1968:90-114). In these texts, the Ba becomes a concept of personal effectiveness, autonomy and intellectual competence and thus, has implications for Maatian ethics (Loprieno, 1988: 92ff).

Maat appears throughout the Coffin Texts first and foremost in relation to the concern for vindication, *m3ʿ hrw* (Anthes, 1954; Greishammer, 1970). The full name of the texts themselves is "The Book of Vindicating a person in the

realm of the Dead" (CT I:1). This Book of Vindication, then, offers ways and words of vindication so that "you may be vindicated against your foes, male and female, against those who would harm you and those who would have judgment against you in the Tribunal" of judgment. Of course, key to this vindication is having done Maat and bringing it to Ra as both a spiritual essence and moral achievement.

Therefore, one says:

> I will not perish. I have entered into Maat, I have upheld Maat. For I am a possessor of Maat. I have gone forth in Maat and my shape is raised up. (CT IV:170)

Declaring oneself innocent of wrongdoing, one says:

> Wrongdoing is what I detest and I will not see it. For I am one who does Maat and I live by means of it daily. (CT IV:62)

Linked to this declaration of Maat-doing and isfet rejection is the aspiration to be like Ra, a possessor of Maat and thus one powerful and light-giving like him. Thus, the deceased says, "I shine like Ra daily, I establish Maat and expel falsehood" (CT II:149). Or again, the text says:

> I am (one) who obeys no magic, who is not scorched by fire nor wet by water.
> \- - - - - - - -
> I will be like Ra every day
> One who will be fashioned everyday by the sun-folk who saw yesterday . . . . (CT II:54)

In these texts, Ra is the Lord of Maat (*nb M3't*), although other divinities may also be called *nb M3't*, such as Osiris. But as Greishammer (1970:86) argues, "*nb m3't*" in this instance means "possessor of Maat." Moreover, in regards to

Ra, "Maat serves as his nourishment; he lives by it, it is offered to him and it is also his daughter" (Greishammer, 1970:74). Maat, of course, is also nourishment for all the divinities as well as humans as the text quoted above states (CT IV:62).

Certainly, one of the most important conceptions in these many meanings of Maat in relation to Ra is the offering of Maat to Ra which was mentioned earlier in terms of the autobiographies which define the offering of Maat as an essentially social practice. In the Coffin Texts the offering of Maat to Ra occurs in a mortuary context is expressed in various ways. First, one may send or bring Maat to Ra (*sbi, ini, smi, iw ḫr m3ʿt n Rʿ*). Thus, CT 165 identifies those "who send Maat to Ra daily (*sbb m3ʿt in Rʿ rʿ-nb*)" (CT III:6). And in CT 491, the deceased summons his various forms and power so that they "bring Maat to Ra (*ini M3ʿt n Rʿ*)" (CT VI:71).

Another way to express offering Maat to Ra in the Texts is to cause it to rise (*sʿr*), as expressed earlier in texts of the First Intermediate Period. Thus, CT 1069 says that the deceased is one "who lifts up Maat to Ra (*sʿr M3ʿt n Rʿ*)" (CT VII:332). And CT 691 says, "I raise up Maat to him who loves it (*sʿr.i M3ʿt n mry [sy])*" (CT VI:322). Thirdly, one may establish Maat for Ra. Therefore, the text reads, "I have established (*smn*) Maat for Ra-Khepri" (CT VII:217). And finally, the text also expresses the idea that one can

and does satisfy Ra with Maat. It reads, "He satisfied (*sḥtp*) Ra with Maat" (CT VI:154).

As Lord of Maat, Ra is presented in the Coffin Texts as the one who weighs Maat. Thus, the deceased represents himself as "*mḫ3t tn nt R' f33t m3't m.s*--this balance of Ra in which he weighs Maat" (CT V:321). It is Ra to whom one ascends and in whose presence the works of vindication are heard. The text says, "You shall ascend to Ra and shall hear the words of vindication in the presence of Ra, in the presence of the Great God: (CT I:81). Moreover, one prays, "O Ra vindicate N" (CT VI:278). It is in light of these concepts which it provides that the Book of Vindication represents an important text in the ethics and religion of Kemet. And not only does it contain these key concepts, it also makes them available to the general population as a central text in the so-called democratization process.

2.4.2 The Declarations of Virtue

In the Middle Kingdom there is a continuing expansion of personal reflection on human and social possibility. One discerns from the texts that there is an expanded sense of possibility of reward for personal achievement, a sense that one could create his own success in life, even from humble origins. This concept of human possibility is reflected in the concept of "iḳr" which closely links the social, ethical and intellectual (Loprieno, 1988:89). The category *iḳr* thus contains a wide range of meanings: excellence, worthiness,

superiority, perfection, wealth, achievement and virtue (Faulkner, 1981:31-32). It is used in this work essentially as a moral category to indicate worthiness, moral excellence and hence virtue. But it clearly has social meanings and implications for the moral and the social are closely linked and interrelated in Maatian ethics.

Certainly, the autobiography of Rediu Khnum is definitive of the rich literature of moral and social excellence of this period (Petrie, 1898: pls.xv and xvb; Lange and Schäfer, 1908 II:164-167). He begins by defining his many titles and then describes both his moral and professional excellence as an integrated whole. He says:

> The Royal Seal-Bearer, sole companion. Favorite (*imy-ib*) of his great Mistress (i.e., the queen), calm in step . . .
> One who knows his station, is firm of seal
> Efficient in the performance at every task
>
> Dignified (*nb šfyt*), open-handed, pleasant mannered (*m3r-inm*)
> White-robed, handsome, godly to behold (*nṯr(y) r m33*)
> One who knows the rule of conduct
> Level-hearted, associate of the officials open-handed
> Forthright, friendly to the petitioner that he may tell his wish
> His lady's confidant (*'ḳ-ib*) whom she favors
> A person of character spoken of with love by the people (*ḳd mrrw m r n rmṯ*)
> One who is front-ṛanked in the Great House
> One revered (*im3ḫw*)

Steward Rediu Khnum who says:

> I am one beloved of his mistress (*nbt*)
> One whom she praises every day
> \- - - - - - - -
> She knew the excellence of my performance (*iḳr st-'.i*) . . .

She placed met at Dendera . . .
I spent a long time there, a span of many
years without there being any fault of mine
For my competence (*rḫ ḫt*) was great
I reorganized it so that its management was
made better than before
I restored (*srwḏ*) what I found ruined (*wsṯ*)
I raised up (*ṯs*) what I found worn out (*fdk*)
I replenished (*mḥ*) what I found lacking (*i3ṯ*)
- - - - - - - -
I gave a gift to one who asked it
I nourished one whom I did not know like the
one I did know
So that my name might be good in the mouth of
those on earth
I am truly an official great of heart (*'3 n ib.f*),
a sweet lovable plant (*ḥn bni n mrwt*)
I was no drunkard; I was not forgetful;
I was not sluggish at my task
It was my heart that furthered my rank;
it was my character that kept me in front
- - - - - - - -
I am one who knows himself as a leader of men,
a precious timber made by God
Who was given excellence in planning and great
nobility of performance.

The rich and varied character of this moral self-presentation is clear. Several things stand out. The first is the last passages on self-knowledge. In these, Rediu Khnum says he is "one who knows himself" (*ink rḫ sw*) and goes on to say that he first knows himself as a leader or one foremost among people (*ḫnt rmṯ*). He also describes himself as "a precious timber made by God" (*ḫt šps ir.n. nṯr*) who was given excellence, skill and nobility of performance. Thus, Rediu Khnum establishes his moral and social grounding in having done and become what people love and God praises. He is foremost among men and precious to God. This, of course, is the interrelatedness in Kemetic thought in general and Maatian ethics in particular of the

divine and human as well as the natural as expressed in the analogy of humans as "precious timber."

The autobiography of the Lady Taniy offers another example of moral self-presentation in the early Middle Kingdom (De Meulenaere, 1988). It is interesting in that it is one of the earliest lengthy statements of moral self-definition by a woman. It is an autobiography which contains a declaration of virtues reflective of her status and context and provides us with other valuable concepts in further defining Maatian conceptions in this period, apparently in the middle of the 12th Dynasty.

The Lady Taniy introduces herself as a *rḫ nsw*, a true intimate of the king, without mentioning his name and then makes a customary appeal to the living to make offering each day and at every festival. After she offers her moral self-presentation, she concludes by noting that she participates in special ceremonies and has seen secret things. De Meulenaere (1988:72) notes that "one cannot fail to be struck by the fact that a woman has been permitted to enter the sanctuary of God." He concludes that "this exceptional privilege, no doubt, could only be granted by the King himself, concerned with demonstrating by this gesture the high esteem in which he held his servant." This is, no doubt, an overstatement, for since the Old Kingdom women were priests and performed various rituals attached to it (Fischer, 1989:12-13). She says:

ink nbt bit ḫnt(y) rḫyt
im3ḫ(yt) ḥs(yt) n nb(.s) nfrt pr.n r(.s)
špss n niswt ḥr m3'(t).s
fḳ3.n.f wi m wdḥw r' nb
'ḳ.n.i m ḥs(yt) pr.n.i mrw(t)
dit.n r.s iḳrw.s dd ḥt irt.n.s
im3ḫ(yt) ḫr ḥmt wr nswt
ḫnm ḥdt rḫ-nsw m3', T3nyy
nb(t) im3ḫ m3' ḫrw ḫr nṯr '3

I am a possessor of character, one who is
at the head of the people
One honored and praised by (her) lord.
Beautiful by what comes from (her) mouth.
One valuable to the King because of her
Maat.
He rewarded me with offerings every day.
I entered as one praised and left as one
loved.
One whose speech reveals her virtues.
One who speaks and it is done for her
One honored before the Great Royal Wife
One who unites with the White Crown
Truly an intimate of the King, Taniy
Possessor of worthiness, justified before the
Great God. (De Meulenaere, 1988:69, fig.1)

Several statements are noteworthy in this declaration. First, her stress on speech are both a source of her beauty and a way of revealing her virtues. Secondly, her statement that her value to the King is rooted in her Maat is of great significance in that it challenges a possible assumption of position by favor rather than moral merit. Finally, she offers an important moral concept of entrance in praise and exit in love, suggesting a constant moral quest to reaffirm one's worthiness by acting in such a way that initial praise is transformed into eventual love.

The autobiography of the Chief Treasurer Tjetji continues this tradition of moral self-presentation integrated

with professional narrative, (TPPI:15-17.20). He defines himself as follows:

> I was indeed his Majesty's favorite (*imy-ib*)
> An official great of heart, cool in temper in
> his lord's house
> - - - - - - - -
> I did not follow after wickedness (*bw ḏwy*) for
> which men are hated
> I am one who loves good and hates evil
> A person of character (*ḳd*) beloved in his
> lord's house who did everything exactly as his
> lord wished
> As for any task which he ordered me to attend to,
> whether it was presenting the case of a
> petitioner
> or whether it was attending to the pleas of the
> need man
> I did it rightly
> I did not neglect the accounting he required of me
> I did not put one thing in the place of another
> I was not arrogant because of my power
> And I did not take property wrongfully in order
> to perform a task
> - - - - - - - -
> I am one who made his character (*ḳd*)
> One praised by his lord every day.

One interesting thing about this declaration of virtue is that it places considerable emphasis on Tjetji's relation with the king in self-definition. Rediu Khnum also placed emphasis on his relations with the queen in self-presentation, but Tjetji seems to rely even more on this relation in his moral and professional portrait. What makes this interesting is that such references diminished greatly during the First Intermediate Period. We see here that although the king's significance changes in the Middle Kingdom, the reassertion of kingship in the reunification of the country engendered praise in moral and social literature. Also of significance is Tjetji's assertion of accountability and the

declaration that he himself made his character. This focus on the moral centrality of character was also expressed above in the autobiographies of Rediu Khnum and Taniy. These assertions are fundamental expressions of Maatian moral anthropology in their emphasis on moral agency and the capacity of a person to make himself regardless of social origin.

Such moral agency is clear also in the autobiography of the priest Mentuhotep (Lichtheim, 1988:69: pl.iv) who says he was "the first among his group, the foreman of his crew, one who found the word he was asked for and who answered to the point." Moreover, he describes his self-construction in spite of being an orphan and having to raise himself without mother or father:

> *kb šsp t r tr.f*
> *idn.n n.f sḫr.f mwt n ḫnt*
> *it ḥr gm.k s3.i*
> *nfr ḳd sb3.n bi3t.f*
> *mi ḫrd ḫpr m-ʿ it*
> *iw sk.(w)i grt w3.kwi r nmḥ*
>
> One calm who received his bread on time
> whose character was a replacement of a
>   mother at home
> A father who said "Take note, my son"
> One beautiful of disposition who was taught
>   by his character
> like a child grown up with a father
> But lo, I had become an orphan.

This is a clear and concise statement of character as a central category in Maatian anthropology. Again, it reflects a fundamental and ongoing emphasis on agency and thus attention to both self- and social-cultivation.

Anthes (1928) has assembled an important collection of texts from Hatnub which reaffirm the thrust toward expanded moral self-presentation in the Middle Kingdom. In the texts one finds a rich moral vocabulary that reveals a moral conception of self which place emphasis on self-control, social service and social recognition of worthiness. The scribe *Ḏhwty-nḫt-'nḫ* says, "I did Maat in my conduct." "I did what is praiseworthy for every person, known and unknown without distinction--*ir.n(.i) ḥsst n rmṯ nb/ rḫw m ḫmw n sṯn.i*" (Anthes, 1928:28.12, 6-8). This virtuous action included: not passing by petitions, providing for relatives, being "a son to the aged, a father to the child, and a support for the poor in every place" and judging "a case on its rightness (Maat)." Again, Maat is posed as a social practice with concern for "rightness in conduct," moral sensitivity to the vulnerable, justice and the obligation to "spread goodness throughout (the land)."

Here too one finds echoes of the instability and rebuilding of moral and political community from the First Intermediate Period. Djehuti-nakht, the treasurer and high priest says that he is "a brave citizen without peer, a possessor of character, great of strength in this land and a possessor of its love . . ." (Anthes, 1928:52.23). Further reflecting the contextual character of his ethical vision and duties, he says "I rescued my city on the day of plunder . . .I was its fortress on the day of battle, its

refuge in the marshland. I sustained it, aiding (it) in its entirety in the drought of the land without (distinguishing) its great or its small." He closed repeating that he is "good of character." Again, these Hatnub texts represent the early passage into the Middle Kingdom, social struggle and change, and an expanding sense of moral selfhood and concern with matters of character (*ḳd*). These and others of their genre, thus, form an important expression of the moral conceptualization and discourse on Maat in this period.

2.4.3 The Moral Narrative

Surely the most definitive text on Maat in the Middle Kingdom as well as throughout Kemetic history is the Book of Khun-Anup (Vogelsang, 1964; Parkinson, 1991). Assmann (1990: 58) makes this point also stating that:

> Wenn es einen Text gibt, der den titel 'Abhandlung uber die Maat' tragen könnte, dann ist es ein Werk des Mittleren Reichs, das unter dem namen 'Die Klagen des Bauern' bekannt ist und zur Gattung der 'Klagen' gehört.

The Book of Khun-Anup, commonly called "The Story of the Eloquent Peasant," is essentially a text on social justice, a moral narrative, in which Khun-Anup, a peasant, pursues a grievance against a rich person and wins, reflecting, as Kemp (1983:116) states, recognition of "the need to ensure that the state accommodated the hopes of the ordinary man." In the process of the narrative, Khun-Anup not only gets justice but delivers a treatise on justice and the obligations of leadership which frames and reflects the moral and

social expectations of leadership even from the masses. As Lichtheim (1992:42) states, "[t]he justice due to the common man was most impressively worked out in the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant."

In his discourse on Maat, Khun-Anup urges leaders to:

ḏd m3't
ir m3't
ḏr ntt wr.s
'3.s w3ḥ.s
gmw.tw ḳft.s
sbw.s r im3ḫ

Speak Maat
Do Maat
For it is mighty
It is great; it endures
Its worth is tested
It leads one to worthiness.
(B1, 320-322)

The leader is reminded that long life and immortality are based on Maatian conduct. Thus he says, "Doing Maat (justice, here) is breath to the nose (*ṯ3w pw n fnḏ irt m3't*)" (B1, 146). The Maatian leader, Khun-Anup says, is "the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, the brother of the divorced woman and protective garment for the motherless" (B1, 62-63). Moreover, he instructs the leader that "The balancing of the land lies in Maat (truth, justice, righteousness). Do not speak falsely for you are great; do not act lightly for you have weight; be not untrue for you are the balance (scales of justice) and do not swerve for you are the standard" (B1, 158-160).

Thus he urges the leader again to do Maat, i.e., justice, saying:

ir m3't n nb m3't
nty wn m3't nt m3't.f
'r šfdw ḳsty Ḏḥwty
ḥr-t(i) r irt iyt
nfr nfrt nfr rf nfrt
iw swt m3't r nḥḥ
h33.s m' ir.s r ẖrt-nṯr
iw ḳrst.f sm3-t3 im.f
n sin.tw rn.f tp t3
iw sḫ3t.f ḥr bw nfr
tp-ḥsb pw n mdw nṯr

Do justice for the lord of justice
whose justice is justice indeed
pen, book and palette of Thoth,
Keep away from wrongdoing
when goodness is good, it is truly good
For justice is for eternity
It goes to the grave with one who does it
When he is buried and the earth enfolds him
His name is not erased from the earth
He is remembered because of his goodness
This is a norm of the word of God.
(B1, 303-311)

This moral narrative, ostensibly used as a text in Egyptian schools, is significant in the study of Maatian ethics for several reasons. First, it is a critique of leadership by a simple peasant and carries implicitly within it a recognition of the right--whether formal or customary--to engage in such a critique. Secondly, its popularity and use in schools could also imply an active tradition of critique and redress of grievance as well as right. Thirdly, the fact that the peasant, Khun-Anup, wins over an upper class person reinforces the concept and practice of a justice without class bias. Fourthly, it is, as Breasted (1934:183ff) suggests, a definition and boast by the officials of a just society with honest officials committed to Maat, an open and viable process for redress of grievances

and the triumph of Maat regardless of class. Finally, the text is important because of the valuable contribution it makes to the corpus of Maatian ethical literature on the question of the nature and value of justice.

In the text, Khun-Anup delineates five criteria for a just leader and thereby gives us an important insight into the Maatian concept of social justice. He defines the Maatian leader as: 1) one "without greed (*šw m ʿwn*);" 2) one "without baseness (*šw m nḏyt*);" 3) "a destroyer of falsehood (*sḥtm grg*);" 4) "a creator of righteousness (*sḫpr m3ʿt*);" and 5) "one who comes at the voice of the caller (*ii ḥr ḫrw ḏd-r*)" (B1, 65-68). The meaning of the second and third criterion is worthy of note for it moves beyond internal righteousness to suggest a need not simply to not lie oneself, but to destroy falsehood in society; not simply to destroy evil, but also to create rightness and by extension to create the conditions for its coming into being. Again, we see the essentiality of self-conscious practice to create the just society.

Finally, the fourth criterion is out of the ethic of care and responsibility which is based both on *imitatio dei* in his justice or *irt mi Rʿ*--acting like Ra. For it is Ra who is "prime minister of the poor," who listens and "hears the prayers of one who calls on him," who "comes at the call of the humble and needy." Truly "Amen Ra is He who knows compassion and hearkens to those who call him," and he

"rescues the oppressed from the oppressor" (Beyerlin, 1978: 30ff: Assmann, 1975). Thus, the just leader is morally compelled to imitate divine activity, which in turn is reflective of divine character, compassion, empathetic understanding and loving kindness which translates in assisting, strengthening and delivering the poor and vulnerable.

2.4.4 The Books of Contemplation

The Books of Contemplation (complaints, Klagen) evolve as a reflection on the absence of Maat. The Sebait and Declarations of Virtue teach the promise of a life of Maat. The Books of Contemplation focus on the paradigm of an isfetic society, i.e., a society devoid of Maat. These Books of Contemplation include the Books of Neferti (Helck, 1970; Golenischeff, 1916: pls. 23-25), Ipuwer and Khakheperrasoneb (Gardiner, 1969) and the Dialog of a Man with his Soul (Faulkner, 1956; Goedicke, 1970). All of these texts portray a society in the throes of Maat deprivation, suffering from natural and social calamities, justice denied or perverted and personal and collective alienation (Ockinga, 1983; Junge, 1977; Erman, 1919).

Paradigmatic of this is the contemplations of Khakheperrasoneb (Gardiner, 1969: pls. 17-18). He laments the deterioration of the order Maat represents and says:

ink pw ḥr nk3 m ḫprt
sḫrw ḫpr ḫt t3
ḫprw ḫpr nn mi snf
dns rnpt r snw.s
sh3 t3 ḫpr m hḏn . . .
rdi.tw m3ʿt r rwty

isft m ẖnw sḥ
ẖnn.tw sḫrw nṯrw
wn.tw mẖrw.sn

wnn t3 m snmn
irtyw m st nbt (I, 10-11)

I mediate on the events,
the conditions throughout the land;
what happens is not like yesteryear
one year is more toilsome than the other.
The land founders beset by dissent . . .
Maat is cast outside,
Isfet is in the council hall;
the plans of the divinities are disturbed,
their arrangements are neglected.

The land is in confusion,
mourning is everywhere . . . .

Ipuwer (Gardiner, 1969: pls. 1-16; Fecht, 1972) laments the loss of the Maatian center, the strong state and the deterioration of human relations as a result. "The man of character walks in mourning because of the state of the land," he says (I: 8). For "lo (Maat) is in the land in name (only). Standing on it one does wrong" (V, 4). Also, he says, "lo, the land turns like a potter's wheel. The robber owns riches and (the noble) is a thief" (II:8-9). In a word, "people are diminished" (II:13) and "the land is left to its weakness ..." (IV:5). Neferti continues this expression of concern on how Maat has been replaced with isfet (Helck, 1970). "I show you a land in turmoil," he says (54). "What should not be has come to pass" (39). Moreover,

Each man's heart is for himself
Mourning is not done today
Hearts have quite abandoned it
A man sits with his back turned

while one slays another
I show you the son as an enemy,
the brother as foe,
A man slaying his father. (42-45)

However, in spite of this exposition chaos, indifference to suffering, moral anarchy and resultant national distress, Neferti ends with a typically Maatian optimism concerning the eventual and inevitable triumph of Maat in the world.

He concludes saying:

A king will come from the south, Ameni,
justified, is his name
The son of a woman of Nubia,
a child of Upper Egypt
He shall receive the white crown and wear
the red crown. (57-59)

This "son of man--*s3 s*" will then defeat the internal and external enemies of Kemet by might and counsel. As a result

iw m3ʿt r iyt r st.f
isft dr sy r rwty
ršy gmht.f (68-70)

Then Maat will return to its place
And isfet will be driven out
May he rejoice who beholds it.

This sanguine assertion reflects not only a profound belief in the power and inevitable triumph of Maat, but also, as Breasted (1934:198ff) notes, contains a parallel belief in the righteous ruler as a savior-king with "no evil in his heart," who does Maat and seeks Maat for his people, as the Books of Contemplation outline. For Breasted (1934:199) this expresses a kind of "Messianism nearly fifteen hundred years before its appearance among the Hebrews."

Finally, in the Dialog of a Man with his Soul, the concerns for the living in an isfetic society are philosophically engaged by raising the question of "To whom can I speak today--*ḏd.i. n m min?*" and then citing the conditions which prohibit such a vital exchange or what Assmann calls "communicative solidarity" (Renaud, 1991; Goedicke, 1970; Barta, 1969; Faulkner, 1956). The inquiry is as follows:

> To whom shall I speak today?
> Brothers are evil (*bin*),
> The friends of today do not love.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> Hearts are greedy (*'wn ibw*),
> Everyone robs his comrade's goods.
>
> (To whom shall I speak today?)
> Kindness (*sfw*) has perished,
> Violence (*nḫt-ḫr*) assaults everyone.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> One is content with evil (*bin*),
> Goodness (*bw nfr*) is cast to the ground
> everywhere.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> He who should enrage men by his crimes--
> (*sp.f bin*)
> He makes everyone laugh (at) his evildoing
> (*iw.f ḏw*).
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> Men plunder (*ḥ'ḏ3*),
> Everyone robs his comrade.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> The criminal (*bt3*) is one's intimate (*'ḳ-ib*),
> The brother with whom one dealt is a foe.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> The past is not remembered,
> Now one does not help him who helped.
>
> To whom shall I speak today?
> Brothers are mean,

One goes to strangers (*d͟rd͟r.w*) for
affection (*mtt nt ib*).

To whom shall I speak today?
Faces are blank,
Everyone turns his face from his brothers.

To whom shall I speak today?
Hearts are greedy,
No man's heart can be relied on.

To whom shall I speak today?
There are no righteous ones (*m3'tyw*),
The land is left to evildoers (*irrw isft*).

To whom shall I speak today?
One lacks an intimate,
One resorts to an unknown to complain.

To whom shall I speak today?
No one is cheerful,
He with whom one walked is no more.

To whom shall I speak today?
I am burdened with grief
For lack of an intimate.

To whom shall I speak today?
Wrong (*nf*) roams the earth,
And ends not. (103-130)

This concern about the absence of "one to whom one can speak" yields a moral vocabulary reflective of the expansion of moral discourse and moral concerns during this period. The moral call is for *sf* (kindness), *bw nfr* (goodness), an *'ḳ-ib* (a true intimate), *mtt nt ib* (affection), *m3'tyw,* righteous ones, and friends and brothers of worth. In contrast to this, one finds a situation of *bn* (evil), *nht-ib* (violence), *bt3* and *sp bin* (crime), *nf* and *iw d͟w* (wrongdoing), *ḥ'd͟3* (plundering) and the need to turn the strangers (*d͟rd͟r.w*) instead of friends (*ḫnmsw*).

The lament that "there are no righteous ones *(nn m3'tyw)*" becomes a clear expression of the sense of an isfetic or non-Maatian situation in the country. The list of things that are posed as wrong are clearly in contradiction to Maatian thought and practice and thus produce a discourse framed by the question "to whom shall I speak today."

Moreover, inherent in these Books of Contemplation is the recognition that Maat as social order can be disrupted and even reversed temporarily. But hidden in the paradigmatic projection is still the faith in Maat. In the case of the general social order, it is still the king who will most definitively return Maat to its place. But increasingly there is a role for the *M3'ty*, the upright or Maatian person who in a cooperative project of social, natural and cosmic proportions maintains and constantly restores Maat (Hornung, 1988).

III

THE MAATIAN IDEAL:
FROM THE NEW KINGDOM TO THE LATE PERIOD

3.1 Maat in the New Kingdom

3.1.1 Early Phase: Formative Context

The New Kingdom (c. 1560-1080) evolves out of the defeat of the foreign invaders called Hyksos (*ḥḳ3w ḫ3swt*) and re-establishment of a strong dynasty under King Ahmose. The decline and disintegration of the Middle Kingdom is a gradual process marked by civil war, decentralization, immigration and agricultural problems (Kemp, 1983:149-182). It is thought that the Second Intermediate Period can be marked as beginning after the death of Queen Sobekneferu (c.1785) and lasts two centuries (Grimal, 1992: Chapter 8; Gardiner, 1964: Chapter 7; Kemp, 1983:149ff).

However, in spite of the Hyksos' invasion and rule in the Delta, a strong group of Theban kings emerges as the foundation of the 13th Dynasty. And by the 17th Dynasty they were ready to offer serious challenge to Hyksos rule.

Ta'a I began the challenge and his son and successor Sekhenenra Ta'a II carried the war against the Hyksos as far north as Cusa. He records that he acted because "the land of Egypt was in distress and there was no sovereign as king of the time" (Pritchard, 1955:231).

Sekhenenra's son, Kamose, took up the challenge after succeeding his father. He was, the texts say, reaffirming divine kingship, a king "whom Ra, in truth, had appointed as the real king." He assembled his advisors saying:

> I should like to know of what use is this strength of mine when a king is in Avaris and another is in Kush and I sit alongside with an Asiatic and a Nubian, each man in possession of a piece of this Egypt and I cannot pass by him as far as Memphis.
> - - - - - - - -
> Thus, I will struggle with him . . . .My desire is to deliver Egypt and smite the Asiatic. (Gardiner, 1916:98.102)

Kamose greatly reduces the power of the Hyksos, but it is Ahmose who eventually defeats the Hyksos and begins to incorporate both lands of Asia and Nubia into the Egyptian Empire. As Kemp (1983:162) states, the strength of the existing Nubian state and of the Egyptian officials and soldiers in service to the Kushite king of the time are evident. The defeat of the Hyksos, other Asian powers and Nubia marks the rise of the New Kingdom Empire and has consequences in various domains of Kemetic life.

One striking feature of the New Kingdom is the prominence of women in the founding of the 18th Dynasty and in the development of the New Kingdom. Grimal (1992:200-201)

notes that Tetisheri, grandmother of King Ahmose, Ahhotep I, his mother and Ahmose Nefertari, his queen, all were recipients of ancestor veneration and ritual commonly called "cult." Ahhotep I is praised in a stela erected by her son, the text of which says:

imi hnw n nb(t) t3
ḥnwt ḥ3w nbt
ḳ3 rn(.s) ḥr ḫ3swt nbt
irt sḫr ʿs3t
ḥmt nswt snt iti (ʿnḫ wḏ3, snb)
s3t nswt mwt nswt špst
rḫt ḫt
n wt kmt
ʿw3.n.s mnf3t.s
nbnb.n.s sy
nwy.n.s wtḫw.s
ink.s tšw.s
sqrḥ.n.s šm3w
ḥmt nswt, Iʿḥḥtp ʿnḫ.ti (Urk. IV:21.1-17)

Give praises to the Lady of the Land
The Mistress of the Islands
Exalted in her name in all lands
She is one who makes plans for the masses
The wife of king and the sister of a sovereign
(Life, prosperity and health to her)
The daughter of a king and the mother of a king, a noble woman
A wise woman
She has taken care of Kemet
She has looked after her soldiers and protected them
She has brought back her fugitives
She has assembled her deserters
She has pacified Upper Egypt
And she has suppressed her opponents
The royal wife, Ahhotep, Long may she live!

Grimal (1992: 201) states that: "this is a clear allusion to the role of the queen mother as regent for her son who was too young to rule alone in the first years of his reign."

Ahmose Nefertari was also a key figure in the founding of the New Kingdom. She initiated the office of "God's

wife" and was the first to hold it, surrendering the title Second Prophet to Amen. Grimal (1992:2091) notes that as evidence of her popularity and centrality, "She is mentioned in at least fifty private tombs and on more than eighty monuments from Thutmose III to the end of the Ramessid period (the turn of the 1st millennium B.C.E.) both in eastern and western Thebes."

Certainly, no other queen was as assertive or as well-known as Hatshepsut who also is key to this period and reaffirms the strong presence of women in this Dynasty. For two decades she ruled establishing her legitimacy in the claim that God, Amen, himself fathered her. Thus, she pays homage to Amen, her heavenly father, and Thutmose I, her earthly father. She says of Amen:

> He allowed me to rule . . .as a reward.
> He placed my border at the limits of heaven.
> What the sun encircles labors for me.
> He gave it to him who came from him,
> Knowing I would rule it for him
> I am his daughter in truth,
> Who serves him, who knows what he ordains.
> My reward from my father is life-stability-rule
> On the Horus throne of all the living, like Ra
> forever. (Urk. IV:368.8-369.2)

It is important to note how Queen Hatshepsut uses the masculine as well as female pronoun to refer to herself, apparently reflecting the predominantly male conception of rulership (i.e., kingship). Also, note how she bases her rule not simply on divine filiation but also on her serving Amen. Finally, during the Amarna Period, queens such as Tiye, senior wife of Amenophis III, and Nefertiti, queen to

Akhenaten, played prominent roles in both government and religion (Aldred, 1988: Chapter 19). Also, Akhesenamun, queen of Tutankhamun, appears to have had a significant though brief role in affairs of state (Aldred, 1988:228-229).

The importance of these citations on the important role of women in the 18th Dynasty speaks to the conception of women in Kemet and points to its implication in both a religious and ethical sense. Certainly, one must make a distinction between the role and status of royal women and the masses of women to draw any objective conclusions about the role and status of women in Kemet. But in the final analysis, this is still a question of gender in spite of class differences. Thus, one can usefully compare the roles and status of women in Kemetic and Kushitic society and contrast this with the role and status of women in Greece, Israel and nearby western Asian societies in similar time periods (Lüddeckens, 1960; Pestman, 1961; Whale, 1989). In this regard, one cannot deny that the legal and social status of ancient Egyptian women, was higher than that of women in these contemporary contrasting societies (Wenig, 1967; Allam, 1985; Lesko, 1987, Watterson, 1991; Robbins, 1993). And this, of course, has ethical implications.

A second major factor in the development of the New Kingdom was the encounter of Kemet with the outside world from both a position of disadvantage during Hyksos rule and

one of advantage during the Empire. The Hyksos' rule was never total and the ancient Egyptians retained their sense of cultural superiority. Queen Hatshepsut summed up this disdain for the Hyksos as a people, culturally and religiously outside the domain of Maat, i.e., the divine order, when she says,

> I have restored (*srwḏ*) which was in
> ruins (*w3si*)
> I have raised up (*wsṯn*) that which was
> damaged (*stpt*)
> When the Asiatics (Hyksos) were in Avaris
> of the Northland
> And the foreigners were in the midst of
> them (i.e., the Northlanders)
> Overthrowing what had been made
> While they ruled without Ra
> He (the Hyksos ruler) did not act by divine
> command until my majesty
> When I was established and firmly on the
> throne
> I was foretold for a period as a born
> conqueror
> Now I have come as the sole one of Horus
> throwing fire against my enemies
> I have removed the abomination of the Great
> God (*bwt nṯr 3'*)
> And the earth has removed their footprints
> Such has been the guiding rule (*tp-rd*) of
> the father of my fathers
> Who came at his appointed time even, as Ra
> And there shall never be the destruction
> of what Amen has commanded.
> (Urk. IV:390.5-391.2; Gardiner, 1946:
> pl. vi.36-42)

It is interesting to note here that Hatshepsut has committed herself to the classical Maatian ethical command to restore good and remove evil. She has come to restore what was destroyed by the Hyksos described as people "who ruled without Ra . . . , who did not act by divine command." She not only says she removed "the abomination of the Great

God," but also, in what seems to have been in a joint cosmic action, the earth has removed even their footprints.

This attitude of moral and cultural superiority remains through the Late Period where the Greeks in the Demotic Chronicle are called "dogs" and the ruler Alexander, "The Great Hound" (Lloyd, 1982:33-34). Its ethical implications are important and will be discussed under the category of moral conception of and concern for the stranger. In spite of this deep-rooted cultural bias so characteristic of ancient societies as distinct from racial bias of modern societies, the demands and influence of empire also had a positive effect on Kemetic society. As Lichtheim (1976:4) points out, the age of empire " . . .fosters a broadening of the intellectual horizon." And "the sense of superiority over foreigners while not abandoned was mitigated by curiosity and tolerance." Specifically, the intellectual horizon is broadened by encounters and exchanges with Nubians, Asians and Europeans which lead to civil servants becoming versed in others' cultures and languages. It became the mark of an intellectual (*sš*, *sẖ*) to know and to demonstrate a competence in other languages.

Moreover, religious thought was also affected by these encounters and exchanges. As Breasted (1934:274) points out:

> [w]ith the expansion of the Egyptian kingdom into a world-empire, it was inevitable that the domain of the God should likewise expand. As the kingdom had long since found expression in religion

> so now the empire was to make a powerful impression upon religious thought.

Thutmose III was for Breasted the symbol of the age of universalism which the empire expressed at "the first character of universal aspects in human history, the first world hero." It is this move toward empire, then, which affected Kemetic religious thought and invites a religious understanding which parallels and undergirds the new expanded political realities.

In the many hymns to Amen Ra, we encounter this expanded vision of religious understanding, especially in terms of God as the creator of all humankind and a God who shows concern for all of what he has created. In the Hymn to Amen Ra by the twin brothers, Suti and Hor, these themes are expressed (Urk. IV:1943-1949). Amen Ra is concerned here with "millions under his care." He is "maker of the earth's yield, Khnum and Amen of humankind, Beneficent mother of divinities and people" and the sole and unique God for whom "every land rejoices" and "every day gives praise." In another hymn of the 18th Dynasty, Amen Ra is defined as:

> Atum who made the people.
> Who distinguished their natures and
> made them able to live
> Who separated the chief colors one
> from another.

Moreover, it says that Amen Ra is he "who raised the heaven and laid out the earth, who made what is and created what will be" (Gebraut, 1874:20.pl.7, 6-7). Finally, in Akhenaten's Great Hymn to Aten, one finds a reinforcement of

this sense of universalism in religious understanding (Sandman, 1938:93.7-96.3). Speaking of the universal reach and concern of God, it says:

> O sole God beside whom there is no other
> You made the earth as you wished, you alone
> All peoples, herds, and flocks
> All upon earth that walk on legs
> All on high that fly on wings
> The lands of Syria and Kush, and the land
> of Kemet
> You set every man in his place
> You supply their needs
> Everyone has food
> It's time of life is reckoned
> Their tongues differ in speech
> Their characteristics likewise
> Their skins are different
> for you distinguished the peoples.
> - - - - - - - -
> You made the Nile in the underworld
> You bring it when you will to nourish
> the people
> For you made them for yourself
> Lord of all who toils for them
> Lord of all lands who shines for them.
> - - - - - - - -
> You make all distant lands live
> You made a heavenly Nile descend for them.
> - - - - - - - -
> How excellent are your ways O Lord of
> Eternity
> A Nile from heaven for foreign peoples
> And the creatures of all lands that walk
> on legs.
> For Kemet, the Nile which comes from
> the underworld.

This hymn expresses both the universalist and humanist worldview of the New Kingdom. It defines all peoples as creatures of God, who though they have different characters, colors and languages are cared for equally by the Divine. And though the Nile is the Divine gift of Kemet, God gives nourishing water to the foreigners from the Nile of heaven,

i.e., rain. Thus, the empire opens up a new vista for human encounter and exchange and the literature reflects and expands this.

3.1.2 Early Phase: Autobiographies

One of the earliest autobiographies of the New Kingdom is that of Ahmose, crew commander and son of Abana (Urk. IV: 1-11). Ahmose's autobiography resembles early Old Kingdom biographies which are essentially narratives of service to the state (i.e., king) and without many direct moral references. It is interesting that he identifies himself as son of his mother, Abana, and mentions his father, a soldier, later in terms of his serving on his father's ship. As a soldier his central virtue is bravery or courage and he recounts how often he is rewarded for it. He says of this cardinal virtue:

> *iw rn n kn m irt.n.f*
> *nn ḥtm(f) m t3 pn d̲t*
>
> Now the name of a brave man is in what
> he has done
> It will not perish in the land forever.

Certainly, also the virtue of trustworthiness as a soldier plays a role in his self-presentation though it is implied rather than explicitly stated. He ends his narrative by declaring he has reached an old age in favor and love of his lord, i.e., the king, both of which are classical points of reference in Maatian ethics.

Going beyond this basic form of the genre, the major expansion in the autobiographies are the eventual central

place the divinities assume and "detailed visions of a personal afterlife lived in the celestial regions where the gods dwelled" (Lichtheim, 1992:48). The steward Kares, who served under King Ahmose, defines himself first in terms of service to the queen mother, Ahhotep I, and then declares his virtues, saying:

> *s n m3ʿt ẖnty t3wy*
> *mty m3ʿ*
> *šw m grg*
> *ḥry-tp n wdʿ mdwt*
> *nḫ m3r*
> *nḥm iwty.sw*
> *did pry s 2*
> *ḥtp m prw.n r.f*
> *mty mity mḫ3t*
> *snw m nḏ-ḥr rn.i*
> *w3ḥ-ib r sḏm mdwt*
> *mity nṯr m wnwt*
> *swḥt-ib n ḥnwt.f m3ʿ*
> *sḫn(.tw.f) n hnwt t3wy*
>
> A man of Maat, preeminent in the Two Lands
> Truly upright
> Free of lies
> Overseer of judging
> Protector of the poor
> A rescuer of one who does not have one
> One who causes two men to go forth
> Satisfied by the utterance of his mouth
> Honest like the scales
> Companion of (the king) who is greeted by name
> Patient in listening to concerns
> Like God in his hour
> Truly the favorite of his Lady
> One who is advanced by the Lady of the
> Two Lands. (Urk. IV:48.12-49.8)

Of special note is Kares' self-description as a "man of Maat" which counts as a significant variation on moral self-descriptions. Earlier we had encountered only *M3ʿty*--a Maatian or righteous person, but here *s n M3ʿt* is introduced. This reflects, of course, Maat not only as a

continuing fundamental ground of moral self-definition, but also as a constantly developing moral vision and practice.

The scribe, Ineni served under three kings, Amenhotep I, Thutmose I and Thutmose II, before passing in the joint reign of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut. He does not use Maat in his moral portrait, but reaffirms the norm of doing what God loves and what serves the interests of king and society. He says:

ḏd n.ṯn rmṯ
sdm.ṯn
ir ṯn bw nfr ir.n.i
ir mitt
sbt.f ‘ḥ‘w m ḥtp
n ẖpr bt3.i
rnpwt m nḏm-ib
nn šnṯt.i
nn srẖ.i
nn kt.i
nn ‘3‘w.i
ink sḫm sḫmw
n ẖpr sk
mnẖ ib n nb.f
šw m b3g
ink sḏm ḏdt.n ḥr.tp.f
n bk ib.i r wrw imyw ist
iw ir.i mrrt nṯr.i niwty
šw.i m d3yt r ḥr ẖt nṯr
ir skk(.f) rnpwt m ḥsy
wnn b3.f ‘nẖ r-‘ Nb-r-ḏr
rn.f nfr m r ‘nḫw
sḫ3t.f 3ẖ.f n ḏt
im3ẖy ḥ3t ns šnwt ‘Imn, sš
Inn(i) m3‘ ḫrw (Urk. IV:61.3-62.9)

I speak to you people
May you listen and do the good
    that I have done
May you do likewise
I spent my lifetime in peace
No evil happened to me
My years were (spent) in joy
I did not quarrel
I did not inform (on others)
I was not petty

I did not do evil
I was powerful among the powerful
I incurred no blame
One excellent of heart for his lord
Free from slackness
One who listened to what his superiors said
My heart was not hostile to the great ones
    of the palace
Indeed, I did what the God of my city loves
I was free of contention
Concerning the matters of God
As for one who passes years as one praised
His soul shall live with the Lord of the
    Universe;
His good name shall be in the mouth of the
    living
His memory and spirit shall live to eternity
The honored one, chief overseer of the granary
    of Amen, the scribe, Ineni, vindicated.

This moral self-presentation invites one to listen to the narrative and emulate the good (*bw nfr*) Ineni has done. It stresses above all discipline in speech, hence prohibitions against quarreling, informing on others and blasphemy. It also urges listening (*sḏm*), excellence of heart and doing what God loves. In its declarations of innocence it prefigures in both form and content the Declarations of Innocence in the Book of Coming Forth By Day.

The autobiographical inscriptions of Paheri, scribe and mayor of Nekheb and Innyt, stand out as one of the most complete and inclusive of this period (Urk. IV:111-123; Tylor and Griffith, 1894). The text has four basic parts: 1) a standard but extended prayer for offering; 2) an extensive vision of the afterlife; 3) a declaration of virtue; and 4) a long appeal to the living to recite prayers

for offerings. We shall concern ourselves essentially with his declarations of virtue. He says:

> I am a noble who was useful to his lord
> One skilled and free of negligence.
> I walked on the road I had inquired about.
> I knew the outcome of life.
> I reckoned the limits in the books,
> The boundaries of all the king's concerns,
> All things that pertained to the palace,
> Like the Nile in its course to the sea.
> My speech was firm in upholding the lord,
> I was fearful of deficiency;
> I was not neglectful leave in making payments.
> I did not embezzle from the surplus.
> I was guided by my own heart
> On the road of those praised by the king.
> My pen made me renowned,
> It vindicated me among the members of
>   the council.
> I surpassed the nobles
>
> My good character raised me high,
> I was summoned as one who is free from what is
>   hateful.
> Were I to be placed on the scales,
> I would come out complete, whole, sound.
> I came and went with the same heart,
> I did not lie to another.
> I knew the God which is in people,
> Knowing him I knew this from that.
> I did the tasks as they were ordered,
> I did not confuse the message with the
>   messenger.
> I did not speak with low-class words,
> I did not converse with people who lacked
>   character.
> I was a model of kindliness,
> One praised who came praised from the womb.
> The Mayor of Nekheb, Paheri, the justified,
> Son of the tutor of the prince, the scribe
>   Itruri, the justified,
> Born of the Lady Kam, the justified.
>   (Urk. IV:118.3-120.9)

Paheri's moral portrait is rich and varied. Especially notable is the well-quoted phrase:

> *rḫ.wi nṯr imi rmṯ*
> *sỉ3.i sw rḫ.i pf3 r pn*

> I knew the God which is in people.
> Knowing him, I knew this from that.
> (Urk. IV:119.15-17)

This reference to the God in people is mentioned earlier in the text in which Paheri is describing the after life. He says of life in the beyond:

> You wake gladly every day
> All afflictions are removed . . .
> You cross eternity in joy
> In the favor of the God which is in
> you (*m ḥswt nṯr imy.k*) (Urk. IV:117.9-12)

This refers to one's heart which is the seat of consciousness and moral sensitivity. It represents the divine in humans and is as Paheri says a guide, a source of character and success.

Later on in the Late Period Phebhor will say the Divine has "placed the heart hidden in the body for the right measure of its owner" (AEL III:188). Here it is taught in the context of the virtue of balance and the heart becomes the Divine's way to insure rational and emotional choices which reflect balance. Moreover, in this period, the heart is also portrayed as an ally or enemy in the post-mortem judgment, depending upon whether one has lived a Maatian or isfetic life. Although the heart has been a central feature of Maatian moral discourse since the end of the Old Kingdom, it plays a progressively larger role in the course of the history of Maatian ethics.

Also, Paheri's moral vocabulary and conceptualization is expansive: he is serviceable (*3ḫ*), free of negligence (*sw*

m mht-ib), fearful of deficiency (*snḏ ḥr ẖrt ḏ3t*) and a model of kindness (*inw wḥ3-ib*). He also tells us he does not speak low-class words or converse with people without character. This is obviously an important text in the development of ethical thought in Kemet and reflects a significant growth of the ways to express moral consciousness and understanding.

Even more expansive in moral vocabulary and conceptualization is the autobiography of Intef, herald and governor under Thutmose III (Urk. IV:964-975). A lengthy moral self-presentation, Intef's declaration of virtue, reflects both a reaffirmation of moral values held in the Middle Kingdom and a clear expansion of moral ideals in the 18th Dynasty. This extensive list of moral claims and concerns include the following virtues.

ṯ3 ib	sharp-minded
ʿrḳ-ib	greatly perceptive
w3ḥ ib r sḏm	patient in listening
šw m isft	free of evil
ʿḳ-ib	upright
nn grg im.f	without falsehood
tr ʿn	respectful of the pleasant person
sḏm sprt	hearer of his petition
sf n ḳb srf	kind to the cool and hot person
tm (mhy) ḥr m3ʿt	not (neglectful) concerning Maat
tms ḥr.f r ḏd m3ʿt	turning his face to the speaker of Maat
mkḥ3 ḏ grg	turning his back to the liar
ḥs sw m irt bw m3ʿ	one who turns here and there to do Maat
tm ṯni ḫm.n.f r rḫ.n.f	*not distinguishing* one he does not know from one he knows
pẖr m s3 m3ʿt	searching after Maat
šw m rdit ḥr gs	free from partiality
sm3ʿ ẖrw n m3ʿty	vindicating the just
ḥd ʿḏ3 ḥr ʿḏ3w.f	punishing the guilty for his guilt

mrw m3r	servant of the needy
it nmḥ	father of the poor
sšmw n tfn	guide of the orphan
mwt snḏ	mother of the timid
ibw n 3t	shelter for the battered
mkty mn	guardian of the sick
nḏty n 3r ḥr ḫt.f in wsr r.f	advocate of one who is deprived of his property by one stronger than he
hi n ẖ3rd	husband of the widow
nht n tfn	refuge for the orphan
st ḥtp n rmw	place of peace for the weeping
h''w r.f iw rḫw im.f	one over whom those who know him rejoice
ḥssw rf ḥr ḳd.f	indeed one praised because of his character
dw3 n.f 'nw Nṯr n-'t-n mnḫ(w)	one for whom the kind thank God because of his excellence
nḥḥw n.f snb 'nḫ in rmṯ nbt	one for whom all the people pray for his health and life (Urk. IV:970.4-972.14)

Intef's declaration of virtues begin with concern for moral and social knowledge. As shown below in Chapter VI on Maatian Anthropology, knowledge is at the center of the Maatian moral project. It is central to both what Intef calls "*pḫr m-s3 m3't*," searching after Maat, i.e., truth, justice and rightness generally, and to explaining and correcting isfetic behavior. Clearly the care and responsibility for the vulnerable has been a long-standing concern in Maatian discourse and practice, and Intef has both reaffirmed and expanded Maatian concepts in this regard. Concepts such as Mother of the timid, shelter for the battered or oppressed, refuge for the orphan and servant of the needy are examples of an expanded and expansive moral vocabulary.

Intef attributes his Maatian practice, consequent development and flourishing to his heart as did Paheri.

Like Paheri, Intef sees his heart as "a god in every body." He says:

in ibi rdi iry.i st m sšm.f hr.i
iw.f n.i m mtr mnḫ
n hḏ.n.i ḏdt.f
snḏ.kwi r tht sšm.f
rwḏ.kwi ḥr.s wrt
mnḫ.n.i ḥr rdit.n.f iry.i
iḳr.n.i m sšm.f
nṯr pw iw.f m ẖt nbt
w3ḏ pw sšm.n.f r w3t nfrt nt irt
mk.wi m mitt iry

It was my heart that made me do this
  as it guided me,
It was for me an effective instructor
And I did not disobey what it said
For I was afraid of straying from
  its guidance.
I flourished greatly because of it,
I excelled through what it caused me to do,
And became excellent by its guidance.
"A god it is who is in every body,
Blessed is one whom it guides to the
  good way of acting"
Lo I was one who acted thusly.
  (Urk. IV:974.1-11)

Finally, the Installation of the Prime Minister text, in this period, as noted above, is key to the concept of Maatian leadership. As it has been discussed above, I will cite only those direct uses of Maat as justice. This text is from the tomb of Rekhmira who served as prime minister under Thutmose III (Urk. IV:1087-1093; Davies, 1973b:84-88, pls. xiv-xv). Maat is first used in the text as a caution against being so eager to avoid being falsely called partial, you deny justice to relatives or by extension those close. This, the king says in his instructions, is in excess of justice (*ḫr ḥ3w pw ḥr m3ʿt*).

The Instructions conclude with several references to Maat as justice. The text says:

mk šft nt sr ir sy m3ʿt
\- - - - - - - - -
mk.s pḥ.k n ir.k t3 i3t
ir.k m3ʿt
mk 3bbt irt m3ʿt m prw n ṯ3ty
mk ḫrp.f pw mty ḏr nṯr
mk ḏdt r sš wr n ṯ3ty
sš m3t ḫrt rf
\- - - - - - - - -
ḥr wp m3ʿt ḫr h3t rmṯ nbt ṯ3ty pw
(Urk. IV:1091.7; Urk. IV:1091.13-1092.5; Urk. IV:1092.8)

Lo, the respect of an official is that
he does Maat.
\- - - - - - - - -
Lo, you succeed in office by doing justice (Maat).
Lo, doing justice (Maat) is what is wanted
in the action of the prime minister.
Lo, he is its true guardian since
(the time of) God.
Lo, what one says of the prime minister's chief
scribe.
"Scribe of justice" (Maat) one says of him.
\- - - - - - - - -
He who does justice (Maat) before all people,
He is the prime minister.

Although, I have translated Maat here as justice, it obviously can also mean truth, balance or other virtues which collectively or individually translate as rightness or righteousness. Nevertheless, it is a fitting description of the prime minister to say he is one "who does justice for all the people" and that the respect of an official lies in his doing justice. This, of course, is a reaffirmation of the centrality of Maat as both a moral and political standard of rightness and the good.

3.1.3 The Amarna Period: Autobiographies

The rise of Amenhotep IV to power in the 18th Dynasty, his changing of his faith and of his name to Akhenaton to reflect this change, and his discarding the existing religious system with the Great God and many divinities marks a significant point in ancient Egyptian religious history and Maatian ethics (Aldred, 1988; Redford, 1984). Given the radical character of the changes, there are various interpretations about the status of Maat in the Amarna period and an ongoing debate on the presence or absence of an ethics in Amarna.

Breasted (1934:292) posed Akhenaton's experiment as essentially a universalistic and naturalistic religion whose founder "was a 'God-intoxicated' man whose mind responded with marvelous sensitiveness and discernment to the visible evidence of God about him." Thus, it was "a gospel of beauty and beneficence of the natural order, a recognition of the message of nature to the soul of man" (Breasted, 1934:294). It was also a universalism which had implications for Kemet internally and externally (see also Gestoso, 1992). Moreover, the texts reveal that Maat is still central to Akhenaton as expressed in his name which contains Maat, his calling Amarna, the seat of Maat, and his continuing recognition of Ra as the author of Maat (Breasted, 1934: 300).

Bonnel (1990:72) agrees with Breasted, contending that the Amarna experiment was "based on revelation given through nature and interpreted in royal teachings . . . ." Thus, he concludes, that this new religion "neglected ethical teachings in favor of a religious naturalism based on beauty instead of righteousness." The problem here, of course, is that such a contention excludes the possibility that both beauty and righteousness or rightness were taught and meant as Maat. In fact, beauty and good are intimately linked in Kemet as well as other African cultures. For example in Swahili, Zulu and ancient Egyptian, the words *uzuri, ubuhle* and *nfrw* mean both goodness and beauty for each culture respectively. Thus, conceptually, the aesthetic and moral are often linked and the good becomes beautiful as the beautiful is seen as good. This interrelationship can be seen in Amen Ra's speech to Hatshepsut concerning the temple she has built for him at Deir el Bahari (Urk. IV:297). The text records Amen Ra's thanking Hatshepsut for building the temple, saying:

> My heart is greatly pleased
> I have appeared in glory to see
> your beauty
> You bring offerings and cool water and
> your hands are pure. (Urk. IV:297.5-9)

First, his description of her as beautiful includes both her ritual and moral purity signified by his describing her as having "clean hands--*w'b 'wy*." Moreover, her beauty is also defined by both her having built the temple and now serving

him ritually with libation and offerings, which is also a moral act. In fact, Paheri as quoted above, says "anyone bending his arms (in offering, prayers, libation) will be acting according to Maat" (Urk. IV:121.12). Thus, ritual practice such as this is called "doing good--*irt bw nfr*" for both God and humans by Lady Ta-Aset (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:191.J4) and is a standard moral and spiritual goodness in other texts (Vernus, 1976).

Furthermore, in her great Inscription on Punt, Hatshepsut reveals again the link between the good and the beautiful. She says:

> I am adding to what was formerly done
> I will cause it to be said by posterity
> how beautiful is this which has happened
> because of her
> because I was so excellent for him
> My heart is set on what he has ordained.
> (Urk. IV:550.7-11)

Thus, Hatshepsut has again revealed the link between the beautiful and the good by describing her good deeds as beautiful. In this regard, then, doing good and being beautiful are mutually implicative and inseparable.

Finally, it is Breasted (1934:295) who pointed out correctly that the spirit of Amarna links "beauty and beneficence of nature" and "was at the same time deeply sensitive to the life of man and to human relations . . . ." What is key in this interrelatedness is, of course, the concept of Maat which not only unites the divine, social and natural, but expresses and grounds an order which is both a

moral and aesthetic good. Thus, then, Maat spoken of in the Amarna texts is not simply truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order and principles of rightness, but of beauty also as the praise poems to the Divine and the created order so aesthetically attest.

Anthes (1952) concludes in his important study that Maat is essentially the concept of truth without ethical content, but Zábkar (1954:94) building on Anthes' (1952) work, concludes differently. He maintains that "Maat is the unifying force of the whole Amarna world. It represents the physical forces of nature, moral and ethical life, duties, prayers, administration, right and truth." And in fact, although in the Amarna period the conception of Maat is clearly unique in some ways, it is not totally different from other periods in ancient Egyptian history (Assmann, 1983a). As Tobin (1989: 86) states, " . . .the Amarna concept of Maat, although somewhat abstract and certainly no longer a mythic symbol, was not so far removed from traditional thought of Egyptian mythic systems." Therefore, as Van de Walle (1979:357) states, in the Amarna period, ". . .le lien moral qui unit le dieu, le roi et le fidèle est la Maat." For it is the ground and expression of an integrated order of being which is both good and beautiful.

What is key here then is that Maat is essentially an integrative concept which finds expression at the very inception of ancient Egyptian theology and cosmology.

Therefore, I tend to disagree with Shirun-Grumach (1985:365-367) in her argument that the Amarna stress on Maat as an integrative principle "of every element in the world, . . .a common feature of every phenomenon in the world" is a new concept. For from the beginning, Maat "was the cosmic force of harmony, order, stability and security, coming down from the first creation as an organizing quality of created phenomena . . ." (Wilson, 1956:48; CT 80). And it is this "organizing quality" of creation, that is the integrative principle, Maat, which Shirun-Grumach considers as a new concept in the Amarna Period.

Also, I do not concede without reservations Shirun-Grumach's contention that Maat is a more abstract and less metaphorical concept in the Amarna period than previously conceived. My reservations revolve around two major issues: 1) the presence of metaphorical language throughout the Amarna texts; and 2) the apparent assumption that the presence of abstractions represents an epistemological shift rather than possibly an intellectual preference or contextual stress.

When Ay says of Akhenaton, "he placed Maat in my body *di.f m3ʿt m* h̲t.i" (Sandman, 1938:91.18), he could be saying several things, all rooted in the historical conception of Maat as an ethical concept <u>and</u> practice. Having it placed in one's body is another <u>metaphorical</u> way of absorbing and assimilating Maat which is also assimilated <u>metaphorically</u>

through its being "eaten" (*wnm*) or "drunk" (*sbi, b'b', swr*) in other texts. Also, although truth is abstract in one sense here, in another sense it is concrete, for it refers to the instructions (*sb3yt*) of the king. Thus, to place truth in the body could be justifiably translated as teaching truth to somebody. All this depends, of course, on translating Maat as truth in this phrase. But it could just as well be translated as he placed righteousness in my body --a more inclusive moral concept which implies truth, justice, order and other cardinal virtues. Therefore, when Tutu (Sandman, 1938:77.1-2) declares his moral innocence by saying *bw šsp fḳ3 n grg r dr m3'ty n 'd3*, "I did not accept the reward of 'wrong' to suppress the righteous for the wrongdoer", he is not talking simply about falsehood and truth. Rather he is using "*grg*" as a metaphor for wrongness in general as he uses "*m3'ty*" as righteous in a similar general way.

This use of '*grg*' or lying and falsehood as a metaphor for disorder, injustice and wrong in general appears also in the Middle Kingdom text, the Book of Khun-Anup. Here Khun-Anup lists as one of the five basic characteristics of the Maatian ruler as "*sḥtm grg,*" a destroyer of falsehood (Khun-Anup, B1:67). And throughout his discourse on Maat, he defines falsehood as one of the cardinal evils which are corrosive and destructive of the moral order, i.e., Maat. Such falsehood violates the communicative ground as much as

the failure to listen and respond actively and appropriately (*3h*). As untruthfulness, then, falsehood is not simply deception but the presence of evil and disorder in the moral community. And as evil and disorder, it is a challenge to the moral order and thus must be driven out so that Maat can return to its place, as the texts teach. In this regard, Bonnel (1990:83, N 26), is correct in his assertion that in the Amarna texts "truth had not only the modern meaning of correspondence to reality but also the meaning of righteousness." And by this same logic, "*grg*" as the opposite of Maat, truth, can also mean not simply irreality or failure to correspond to reality but also, as I have argued above, unrighteousness.

It is my contention, then, that the Amarna period does express an ethics--one which is less expressive than the classical ethical discourse, but nevertheless present. The texts are comparatively small in number but there are those cited above in part as well as others. There is constant reference to Akhenaton and his teachings (sb3yt) which are also called "*sb3t 'nḫ*" (teachings of life, Lebenlehre), a basic concept used in Maatian ethics from Ptahhotep to the Late Period.

In the autobiographical inscriptions of the nobleman, Tutu, we find ethical concerns and claims similar to those throughout Kemetic history. He says:

> I did not do what my majesty hates.
> My abomination is falsehood in my body.

For it is the great abomination of Wanra
    (Akhenaton).
To his majesty I presented Maat.
For I know he lives by it.
You are Ra who begat Maat.
You appointed me as hereditary noble,
For my voice was not raised in the house
    of the king.
My stride was not broad in the palace,
And I did not accept the reward of falsehood
To repress the righteous person for the sake
    of the wrongdoer.
But I did justice (Maat) for the sake of the
    king, doing what he commanded of me.
    (Sandman, 1938:76.16-77.2)

Thus, all these ethical claims fit within the classic framework of Maatian ethics--the hatred of falsehood (*grg*), the presenting of Maat (*s'rt m3't*), the contention that the king loves and lives by Maat and the virtues of self-control and humbleness.

In a similar vein, the divine father, Ay, expresses an ethics well within a traditional framework also. He says:

ink mty m3' šw n 'wn
pḥ rn.i 'ḥ ḥr 3ḫ n nswt
ḥr sḏm sb3yṫ.f irt hpw.f
tm sb mdwt ḥd bit

I am truly upright, free of greed.
My name reached the palace for serving
    the king.
For hearing his teachings and practicing
    his law,
Without confusing words or lacking character.
    (Urk. IV:1997.13-16)

Again, these declarations of virtue are part and parcel of the ethical teachings of the prior periods and thus in this case, reaffirm continuity in concept and practice.

Again, even though the Amarna period represents a new development on the one hand, on the other hand, it also

represents continuity (Anthes, 1952; Assmann, 1983a; Redford, 1984; Aldred, 1988). Assmann (1983a) notes correctly that much of what Akhenaton develops already is present in the new theology surrounding Amen Ra. But this represents an additive development, not a wholly disaffirmative one. In other words, development can be and often is in ancient Egyptian culture more addition than negation, more affirmation than disaffirmation. And as noted above, this has led to external observers seeing contradictions where the ancient Egyptians saw none. Therefore, my contention is that in Amarna and certainly in the immediate period preceding Amarna, there is not so much an epistemological shift from metaphorical ways of knowing and explicating to an abstract mode as there is a different intellectual and contextual preference. This is perhaps even clearer with Akhenaton and his immediate followers, than with the average Egyptians who seem never to have really accepted Akhenaton's doctrine and quickly returned to or began again to practice openly the traditional teachings (Redford, 1984; Aldred, 1988).

3.1.4 The Restoration

Nothing is more definitive of the restoration of the former established order after Akhenaton than Tutankhamun's Restoration Inscription (Urk. IV:2025-2032; Bennet, 1939) and Neferhotep's Hymn to Ra as the Lord of Maat (Davies, 1973, pl.xxxvii). Tutankhamun describes Akhenaton's reign

as a reign of disorder (*isft*) as distinct from a reign of Maat saying:

> The temple of the Gods and goddesses were desolated,
> From Elephantine (The First Cataract) as far as the marshes of the Delta.
> . . .Their holy places were abandoned and had become overgrown tracts.
>
> Their sanctuaries were like they had never been before,
> And their houses were trampled.
> The land was in an evil state,
> And as for the divinities, they had forsaken the land.

But King Tutankhamun describes himself as "a good ruler" who has done excellent things" for his father Amen. Indeed, "he drove out disorder (*isft*) from the Two Lands and Maat is firmly in its place. He made lying (*grg*) an abomination and the land is as it was at the first time (*sp tpy*)" (Urk. IV:2026.15-19).

Neferhotep, the chief scribe of Amen, gives us an excellent praise poem to Ra as Lord of Maat, reaffirming Maat's centrality and expansiveness. He (Davies, 1973:pl. xxxvii) says:

> *i R' ḥtp m m3't*
> *ẖnm.n m3't m ḥ3t.f*
> *i R' wbn m m3't*
> *ḥtp.n m3't nfrw.f*
> *i R' mnḫ m m3't*
> *smn n.f m3't m wi3.f*
> *i R' wsr m m3't*
> *'nḫ.f im.s r' nb*
> *i R' msiw m3't*
> *ḥnk.tw n.f m3't*
> *ḋd.k m3't ḫnt ib.i*
> *si'r.i s(y) n k3.k*
> *iw.i rḫ.kwi 'nḫ.k im.s*
> *ntk iriw ḏt.s*

ink 'ḳ3 šw m grg
nn ir sp snnwt
nṯrw nbw m3'ty
šsp.tn sš n 'Imn Nfrḥtp
m3' ḫrw m ḥtp m ḥtp

O Ra who sets with Maat,
Maat is joined to his brow.
O Ra who rises with Maat,
Maat embraces his beauty.
O Ra, effective through Maat,
Maat is secured to his bark.
O Ra mighty through Maat,
Whereon he lives daily.
O Ra who engendered Maat,
And to whom one offers Maat:
You placed Maat in my heart
That I may raise her up to your ka!
I know you live by her
And it is you who made her body.
I am a straight one free of lies,
Who does not practice deception.
O Divinities, lords of the two Maats,
May you receive Amen's scribe Neferhotep,
justified, in peace, in peace.

Ra, then, remains the creator of Maat and the one to whom one offers Maat. Here, Maat is reaffirmed as the foundation of both the world order and ethical thought and practice. It is, Neferhotep says, placed in the heart and then raised up and returned to Ra continuously.

3.1.5 The Ramessid Period

3.1.5.1 Introduction: Piety and Ethics

The Ramessid period in the New Kingdom was introduced in the age of piety by Breasted (1934:303ff). Although Erman coined the term "personliche Frommigkeit" in his work Denksteine aus der thebanischen Gräberstact (1911), it was Breasted (1934:chap. xvi) who gave the age its name and made it a standard Egyptological reference. Gunn (1916) in his

article, "The Religion of the Poor," discussed four of the texts in Erman's collection of eleven. It is these four texts which were found at a workman's village of Deir El-Medina and which have become the subject of so much debate and discussion (Tosi, 1988). These texts are one of Nebra (KRI III:653ff), two of Neferabu (KRI III:771 ff and 772ff) and one of Huy (KRI III:795). There is also a similar text by one Ken (KRI III:687). What is so engaging to Egyptologists about these texts is that they show expressions of penitence, which were not as evident in previous literature. But as Griffiths (1988) states concerning Gunn's article, "it is unfortunate in its suggestion that this age had an exclusive right to be so." For "'personal piety' certainly appeared in other ages." In spite of this, however, there are definite changes in this period which merit attention and study.

First, there is the so-called democratization of access to what was considered royal prerogatives by the ordinary person. This process is a debated one and Assmann (1989a: 73) asserts that he prefers to call the process, not democratization of the access to immortality, the Ba and Osirian status, but rather "demotion" or "demotisation." Finnestad (1989b:92) argues that "the term of 'democratization' appears to be somewhat misleading, as it concentrates too heavily on the individual person--democracy being a concept that stresses equal rights and privileges for all

individuals, while it is rather the collective dimension of a person which is brought into focus by the category pharaoh." Given this, "the acquisition of pharaonic attributes must be understood with reference to this social identity and the kind of life connected with it." In a word, Finnestad concludes, "it is not so much an acquisition of royal privileges by everyone," but a partaking in "the social identity of the Egyptian community" and thus gaining access to the post-mortem life as part of a community. This, in part, reflects a communitarian view of Kemetic society rather than an individualistic one and thus, fits well within the conceptual framework of this work. The difference, however, is that it is my contention that there is not so much a partaking in the social identity but an expanded participation in it.

Also Sorensen (1989) suggests that the so-called democratization process was a continuous process from the Old Kingdom on, evidence of which was restricted due to decorum. This restrictive decorum becomes even less inhibiting in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom where Sorensen (1989:114) argues "there is no textual mark of royal status in terms of divine access," i.e., "no limits to the use of royal funerary texts." There remained some limitation to private divine access, however, but we witness here, Sorensen contends, the evolution of a religious status. In the New Kingdom in the Ramessid

Period, there are for the first time numerous scenes of ordinary persons worshipping their God face to face and an increase in personal piety. And the widespread use of The Book of Coming Forth By Day represents an important popular access to and understanding of central religious texts and their use. Therefore, Sorensen (1989:122) concludes, "viewed in the light of the broader socio-cultural process . . .such expressions of personal devotion and personal religious experience are better taken as an aspect of increased divine access" [emphasis mine]. In a word, "the process did not tend to make people more religious, but rather to deconstruct traditional bonds between religion and the central structure of Egyptian society."

In this context, also there is then an increase in piety, i.e., more turning toward God for answers, comfort and grounding. But more definitive than this increased reference to God, as Griffiths (1988:99) is the increase in confessional literature with its attention to evil done, resultant suffering and repentance and healing. The Ramessid period, therefore, does develop an ethics informed by an increased expression of piety. The chief sculptor, Userhat, offers a paradigmatic example of this, linking right-doing with reference to the Divine. Previously such links were made but not as often or in as many ways. Note how Userhat begins with an appeal to the Divine and ends with a declaration of loyalty to the Divine. He says:

i nṯrw imy 3bḏw nbw ʿnḫ tp t3
mssdyw grgw isft ʿnḫyw m m3ʿt
ink m3ʿ ir ḥr mw.tn
n sm3 ib.i ṁ ḏw-ḳd
n šm.i ḥr w3t nt sh3
n sḏd.i ḥnʿ ḳ3-ḫrw
bwt.i pw ẖnn mdwt.f
n hnn.i n ḏdt.f nb
iw.i rḫ.kwi bwt nṯr.i
ir.i ḥr mw n wḏ.f

O divnities of Abydos, lords of life on earth,
Who hate lies and wrongdoing and live by Maat:
I am a just person who acts on your water,
I did not unite in heart with the one of evil
    character.
I did not follow the path of hostility,
I did not converse with the loud-voiced;
My abomination is the tumult of his words, and
I did not assent to anything he said.
I know what my God hates,
And I act on the water of his command.
    (KRI I:361.5-8)

Lichtheim (1992:67) has pointed out that there is in the Ramessid autobiographies a clear connection between the authors' discourse on "right-doing and their hope for recognition and reward in the here after." Added evidence of this may be found in the inscriptions of the craftsmen and workmen at Deir El-Medina (KRI III:576ff) who, like the craftsman Karo (KRI VII:410-411), prayed for "a good burial after old age, landing in the desert of the praised ones, in the great west of Thebes" (KRI VII:411.1-2).

One can also see in this period the increased personalization of relations with the Divine. In his autobiography the chief sculptor, Huyshery (KRI I:332-333), seems to speak of Maat as a personal goddess (*nṯr*) rather than simply as a principle (KRI I:332.16ff). In fact, there is a merger of

the two concepts, i.e., Maat as a divine power (or goddess) and as an ethical norm. Thus, he says:

ḏd.i n.tn rmṯ n m-ḫt ḫpryt ḥr s3.i
ink w' iḳr kbḥ ---
rdiw m3't m ib.f
nn wni sp.s
pr.n.i m ẖt 3bḫ.s m ib.i ---
rḫ.kwi ḥtp nṯr.i ḥr.s
'nḫ.f im.s r' nb
in w' iḳr mty m3'
nn sm3.n.f m ---(KRI I:332.16-333.1-2)

I say to you, future people coming after me:
I was one who was worthy, cool ---
Who had put Maat in his heart
Without neglecting her occasion.
Since I left the womb she was joined to my heart ---
For I know my God is pleased with her
And lives by her every day.
So says one worthy and truly upright,
Who did not associate with [the evildoer].

Gardiner (1964:7), however, provides a Ramessid letter which contains a declaration of virtue reflecting back to an earlier period when one defined oneself in socially ethical terms of relations and practice. The scribe Hori says: "I shall be buried in Abydos in the abode of my father. For I am the son of truth (Maat) in the city of the Lord of truth (Maat)" (Gardiner, 1964:12). But his moral self-presentation is one which is rooted more in social ethics than in theological ethics. Thus, he says:

Hori, the scribe noble of heart patient
in discussion.
One at whose utterances men rejoice when
they are heard;
- - - - - - - -
Adept in knowledge, fortunate because of it;
Protecting himself with his good qualities;
Beloved in men's hearts, without being
repelled;
Men make a friend of him;

They do not tire of him.
All that goes forth from his mouth is
steeped in honey;

The heart is refreshed with it as it were
with medicine
- - - - - - - -
His friend scribe Amenomope is described as:

Noble of heart, goodly of qualities, adept
in knowledge,
Beloved of all men, beautiful to him who
beholds his charm,
like a flower of the marshes in the
heart of others . . .
Patient of heart, loving mankind, rejoicing
at deeds of justice (Maat),
He turns his back upon iniquity.
(Gardiner, 1964:6, 7)

In conclusion, then, the expansion of expression of piety in the Ramessid period is clear, especially in terms of prayers of penitence. But the autobiographies, while containing this emphasis on piety in many cases, still reflect similar emphases from former times. Therefore, again, one has both change and continuity.

3.1.5.2 The Sebait

The two New Kingdom Sebait of Ani and Amenomope demonstrate a similar synthesis of wisdom and piety and of continuity and change (Suys, 1935; Grumach, 1972). The Sebait of Ani seems to have been composed in the 18th Dynasty whereas the Sebait of Amenomope is usually assigned to the Ramessid period. Also, the Sebait of Ani is not aristocratic in its views and values and perhaps, reflects a growing middle class' appropriation and use of once exclusively aristocratic and royal forms of instructions as

legacy. It combines traditional themes with an innovative addition of a dialog between father and son on the possibilities and problems of Sebaitic instruction and the teachability of humans.

Ani begins with advice on marriage and having children and then proceeds to instructions in piety. His teachings are expansive and thus include numerous topics in addition to the ones cited above. These include moral virtues such as filial responsibility, especially for one's mother, sexual discipline, truthfulness, following tradition, respect for elders, learning, shaping one's character and building righteous friendship as well as other central values.

The moral vocabulary of Ani is basically similar to that of the historical moral discourse in Maatian ethics and often uses polarities to teach Maatian thought and behavior. Included in this vocabulary of moral polarities are:

bit nfr — good character
bi3t bin — evil character
ḏd m p3 nḏm — speak sweetly
smi snw — noxious speech
bt3 — crime
mty — upright
ḏww — evil
'ḏ3 — malice
ẖnms — friendliness, friendship
'rk — wise
swg3 — foolish
ḥ3ty mrw — the loving heart

The ancient value of *gr* (silence, self-control) is taught in Ani also, as well as the value of following the way, path or tradition (*w3t*). This category *w3t* is also used in the phrase *w3t nt 'nḫ* (way of life) or *w3t nt nṯr* (way of God)

as is the case in the Sebait of Amenomope and the autobiographies of the Late Period, i.e., Petosiris and the Lady Tahabet.

For the most part in Ani, the word Maat and its adjectival or participial forms are not used. Instead the words *mty*, upright and *mtyt* uprightness are used. There is, however, use of *m3'* in the passage:

> Choose as a friend one who is upright
> (*mty*) and true (*m3'*)
> And if your uprightness (*mtyt*) equals his
> your friendship will be balanced.
> (Ani, V,7-9)

The second use of Maat in Ani is in the form of *m3'tyw*, the righteous. It is used in an instruction concerning not responding to an attacker but leaving him to God--a concept reaffirmed in the Sebait of Amenomope. The passage reads:

> Speak sweetly and you will be loved
> Never respond to an attacker.
> Do not set a trap (for him).
> It is God who judges the righteous.
> (As for the attacker) his fate comes
> and carries him away. (Ani, VII,11-12)

Therefore, the category Maat, although central to the moral conception and instruction in this Sebait, is not mentioned. This, as repeated above, is a regular occurrence, for the presence of the category itself is not as important as the corpus of moral values and moral vision which Maat undergirds and informs. And certainly, Ani contains standard moral values of the Maatian tradition.

The Sebait of Amenomope is one of the most, if not the most, discussed Sebait (Grumach, 1972; Budge, 1924; Williams

1962). This is first due to its apparent shift from a predominantly social ethical emphasis to a predominant emphasis on internal moral development and piety. Thus, the historical stress on prosperity, achievement and human possibility does not play as large a role in the Sebait of Amenomope as in that of Ptahhotep. Still, however, there is continuing concern for the vulnerable, instructions against falsehood, force, cheating and deception, and stress on coolness of character vs. hotheadedness, the importance or being loved and the continuing promise, "Do good and you will prosper--*ir nfr pḥ.k wnw*" (17,5). A second reason that Amenomope is discussed so much is its obvious contribution to the literature of ancient Israel, in particular, the Book of Proverbs (Williams, 1962; Breasted, 1934). And thirdly, it is also much discussed in the context of a possibility of shift in the relevance of Maat and the "free will of God" (Brunner, 1963; Assmann, 1990: 252ff; Lichtheim, 1992:99ff).

The word Maat appears twice also in full form in Amenomope. But it appears several times in adjectival or participial form, most importantly in the introduction of the moral category *grw m3'--geru maa*, the truly self-controlled, one of the most important moral categories in Maatian ethical thought. The category is introduced in Chapter IV to contrast with the unrestrained or hot-tempered man (*šmm*) which is elsewhere contrasted with the cool person (*ḳb*). Chapter 4 reads:

ir p3 šmm m ḥt nṯr
sw mi š3 rdw m ḫnti s
km 3t p3y.f ḫ3‛ srdm
in.tw pḥ.f n m ẖrm
sw mḥ w3w r st.f
t3 st3 t3y.f ḳrst

gr m3‛ di.f sw m rwi3
sw mi š3 rdw m tḥnt
sw 3ḫ3ḫ ḳ3b.f šmẇ.f
sw n ḫft ḥr n nb.f
dg3.f bnr ḫ3b.f nḏm
in.tw pḥ.f m mnw (4,1-12)

Now the unrestrained man in the temple,
He is like a tree grown indoors
Its growth lasts (but) a moment.
It reaches its end in the woodshop,
It is floated far from its place
And fire is its burial ground

But the truly self-controlled man sets
himself apart.
He is like a tree grown in sunlit field.
It grows green, it doubles its yields
It stands before its owner
Its fruit is sweet; its shade is pleasant.
And it reaches its end among (other) trees.

It is important to note here that *gr* suggests not simply silence but self-control. Likewise, *šmm* refers to not simply a hot-tempered person but a person who lacks control. As Marzal (1965:31) states:

> con estos términos, 'silencio' y 'acalorado,' describe, pues, el autor dos cualidades morales y estado de ánimo: la pasión incapaz de dominarse y el equilibrio ecuánime.

However, he believes this stress on self-mastery is essentially control of speech, but, in fact, it is inclusive, referring to self-control in all areas.

The two direct uses of the word Maat occur in the 19th and 20th chapter, the last of which is the most discussed.

In the 19th chapter, Amenomope uses Maat to teach truthfulness, in this case, in court. Thus he says "do not enter court . . .and falsify your speech" (20,8-9). Rather:

> *ḏd m3ʿt m-b3ḥ sr*
> Speak truth before the magistrate. (20,14)

This, of course, is in a broader sense an instruction to tell truth, but in a particular sense, it is teachings about not bearing false witness (Grumach, 1972:137ff).

The last and what has evolved as the most-discussed direct use of Maat is again in the context of judicial justice. The preceding passages are:

> Do not confuse a person in a court of law,
> Nor put aside the just man (*m3ʿty*).
> Do not incline toward the well-dressed man,
> And reject the one in rags.
> Don't accept the gift of a powerful person,
> Nor oppress the weak for his sake. (20,21; 21,4)

Then comes the famous passage:

> *ir m3ʿt f3t ʿ3t*
> *di.f sw n mr.f*
>
> Now, Maat is the great gift of God
> He gives it to whom he wishes. (21,5-6)

It is from this passage that Brunner (1963:109) comes to the conclusion that: 1) the free will of God included unpredictable and arbitrary interventions, and 2) that with this passage, the thinking in former Sebaitic literature was set aside (<u>aufgehoben</u>). In his (1988:56ff) new volume on wisdom literature, however, he has somewhat modified his views to respond to Garnot's (1963) concerns about such a strong stance at the expense of complexity and synthesis. Assmann

(1989a; 1989b:72ff; 1990:252ff) has supported Brunner's view and has labelled this shift the "Ausgänge aus der Ma'at." He describes the change as one:

> von Weisheit als Einsicht in den immanenten Richtungsinn des 'Geschenden' (i.e., hprwt) zur Weisheit als Einsicht in die Abhängigkeit des Menschen vom Willen Gott.

In a word, "The idea of Maat stands or falls so to speak on the self-regulating immanence of an order which lies in the nature of things." Thus, "[w]hen the will of God replaces this order, Maat vanishes (verschwinden)" (Assmann, 1990: 252).

Certainly, there is an increased reference to and reliance on God expressed in the New Kingdom, especially in Ramessid literature. This, of course, is nowhere clearer than in the Book of Amenomope which argues that one should not seek a protector from those who injure you among humans but rather should:

> *ḥms.n.k r 'wy p3 nṯr*
> *iw p3y.k gr ḥdb.w*
>
> Settle down in the arms of God
> And your silence (or self-control) will
> overthrow them. (22,7-8)

God seems now to intervene more often and Maat, the natural law operative in the world, is revised in part in conception. This represents a development which continues into the Late Period and adds the extra dimension of concern for fate (Otto, 1954; Lichtheim, 1983; Brunner, 1963). More-

over, Amenomope argues the fallibility of humans and the perfection of God saying:

> *wn p3 n<u>t</u>r m n3y.f mnḫ*
> *iw p3 s m n3y.f wh3*
>
> God is ever in his perfection.
> Man is ever in his inadequacy. (19,14-15)

Therefore, he concludes, you should strive for self-control and strive for internal development. Moreover, he says:

> *ir ḥ3ty n rm<u>t</u> fn<u>d</u> n n<u>t</u>r*
> *s3w.tw r mkḥ3.f*
>
> The heart of a man is a gift of God.
> Beware of neglecting it, (i.e., its cultivation). (24,4-5)

It is in this process and achievement that one will see the value of speaking truth and doing justice, especially for the vulnerable. Such Maatian practice, he asserts, will be found to be a way of life (*w3t n ʿnḫ*) (16,8) which brings peace of mind and spiritual grounding. Thus, evidence of increased piety and anticipated intervention of God is found here.

In this regard, one recognizes E. Otto's (1954), H. Brunner's (1963) and Jan Assmann's (1989a, 1989b, 1990) contribution in noting the changes in the development of the concept of Maat between the Old Kingdom and Late Period. Like Brunner and Assmann, Otto in his work on the Late Period autobiographical inscriptions, identified a change from the classical conception of the correlation between action and its consequences as one which resembled the natural law of reciprocity to one of giving preference to

the will of God in human life. However, while recognizing evidences of such changes, there is also evidence of continuity and thus support for the idea that Brunner, Otto and Assmann might have over-stated their cases. Garnot (1963: 118ff) disagrees with Brunner and argues "from the early period, God interests himself in the destiny of man and very often from his own request, intervenes . . . ." His point is that one should, based on the documents, accept both the freedom of God and humans and the possibilities this poses for humans. He, thus, rejects the idea of predestination or an arbitrary God.

Lichtheim (1992:99ff) also rejects Brunner's and Assmann's theses. She argues that in her text on Maat in the autobiographies, "[t]he sources assembled (in her new book) do not support the thesis of the absorption of wisdom by piety and the concomitant disappearance of Maat." In fact, as Lichtheim has proved by the autobiographical and Sebaitic data, Maat remains both a viable category and a "principle of man's personal initiative, responsibility and accountability for doing right." In a word, Maat remains a vigorous and vital concept, category and practice. And as mentioned above in discussing autobiographic literature of the First Intermediate Period, even if Maat does not appear as a category, it is present in the concepts and practice which form the moral core of the autobiographies.

Furthermore, Lichtheim (1992:99ff) argues correctly that the autobiographies she has assembled "have formulated ever more emphatically that the thinking about Maat was linked to thinking about the will of the Gods." Likewise, this will, as the texts demonstrate, was not "viewed as hidden, unpredictable or arbitrary." On the contrary, texts reaffirm again and again, "I did Maat because I know God loves it, wills it, praises it and lives by it" (see texts cited above). She contends rightly that Amenomope's sayings should be read in context, i.e., its judicial admonition against corruption and urging of justice as fairness. Moreover, she maintains that "to think of one's virtue as a "gift of God" was a popular notion current in all time. She offers Rediu-Khnum's declaration of being a "precious timber made by God" and that Khnum "made his character superior to others." Likewise, Phebhor (13,4-5) states that "shame is the gift of God (to) him who one trusts. He does not apportion it to the evil man, nor to the impious one." Numerous other examples are also available.

Teeter (1990) has also challenged the assumption of the decline of the significance of Maat, arguing that Maat remains an important religious concept both in royal and mass religious practice. As she (1990:271) contends, her important study of temple reliefs reveals two basic challenges to Assmann's contentions. She states that:

> The evidence from a study of the presentation of Maat and of the name equated with Maat strongly

> attests not only to the continuation of the pre-Ramessid association of the king and Maat, but also to a new emphasis upon the role of Maat in relationship to the kingship in the Ramessid area.

Moreover, she notes that "simultaneously Maat achieves a new prominence in the funerary beliefs of the common man." What is clear here, then, is that Maat remains a significant even fundamental concept and practice in the spiritual as well as moral realm. And the discourse on its death and disappearance has been, so to speak, "greatly exaggerated."

Thus, while recognizing evidence of significant developmental changes in Kemetic spirituality and ethics. I tend to see them as essentially developmental additions, not substitutes which are negative to the earlier religious and ethical beliefs and concepts. Also, it should be noted that in the effort to move from the Frankfortian idea of changelessless in Egyptian society, there is a possibility of overstressing change at the expense of recognition of continuity and failing to discuss critically the modalities of change, i.e., whether it is additive, substitutive or negative, i.e., in the sense of negating the existent. For it is a well-known and well-conceded fact among scholars in ancient Egyptian studies, both in and outside Egyptology, that Kemet had a tendency not to discard its tradition but simply to build on it, often practicing or upholding what at first sight seemed to be contradictory principles (Anthes, 1959: Frankfort, 1948b; Hornung, 1982).

My preference, then, is to see continuity in change and to call attention to textual evidence that shows continuity in change. If one looks at Amenomope, one sees not only an increase in expressions of piety and reliance on God, but also the continuing stress on the same ethical values that informed the earlier concept of Maat. Thus, Amenomope introduces his Sebait with a description which parallels and reaffirms the purpose of all the Sebait. He (1,1-12) says his Sebait is:

ḥ3ty m sb3yt n 'nḫ
mtrw n wḏ3
tp-rd nb n 'ḳ'ḳ srw
ntw.' n smrw
r ḫsf wšb n ḏd sw
r' n smi n h3b sw
r s'ḳ3.f r mit n 'nḫ
r swḏ3.f ḥr tp-t3
r dit h3y ḥ3ty.f r k3r.f
iry ḥm.f r ḏw
r nḥm.f m r3 n k(3)wy
smsm m r3 n rḫyt

Beginning of a teaching for life
Testimony for well-being
Every rule for relations with elders
Protocol for courtiers
To know how to answer one who speaks
To return a report to one who sends it
To direct him on the way of life
And make him prosper on earth
To let his heart enter its shrine
To cause him to steer clear of evil
To save him from the mouth of strangers
And to let (him) be praised in the mouth
of the people.

These are clearly expressed concerns of prior Sebait and contain a conception of the morally good life, a way to achieve it (*mit 'nḫ*) and the assumption that it is the ground of a prosperous life on earth.

Moreover, the prosperous life is still posed in the context of a moral life. "Do good and you will prosper (*ir nfr pḥ.k wnw*)" Amenomope (17,5) says. Moveover, he gives instructions against greed, theft, lying, injustice, deception, violence, and other vices and he offers the enduring admonition to "set your goodness before the people and you will be greeted by all (*im nfr.k m-ḫt n rmṯ wšd.tw ḥr-nb*)" (10,17-18). Especially obvious, as stated above, is the continuing concern for the vulnerable--the poor, the widow, the elders, the blind, the dwarf, and the mentally disabled. This also obtains in the Sebait and Declarations of Virtue in the Late Period along with the increased concern for fate. There are then, no end of Maat or the Maatian moral idea in this period, for the same concepts remain, as well as the category Maat itself, through the Late Period as the autobiographies and the Sebaitic literature of Phebhor and Ankhsheshonqi demonstrate (Lichtheim, 1992:101).

However, there is a tendency to retain the basic moral concepts but use the category Maat less. In its place, as in Ani and Amenomope in the New Kingdom and the autobiographies of Petosiris and family, Lady Tahabet and others in the Late Period, is the category *w3t* or *mṯn*, the way. This is usually joined with life and God. Therefore, one has the way of God (*w3t nṯr*) and way of life (*w3t ʿnḫ*). Both retain the basic meanings of Maat as moral thought, emotion, speech and conduct; and both reflect assumptions about the nature

of God, society and the universe which are rooted in and build on early Maatian conceptions. In a word, they are rooted in the expansive concept of Maat as that which God loves, wills, lives by and praises which evolves in the Old Kingdom and develops continually throughout Kemetic history. But again the concept Maat is also used and continues to be used throughout Egyptian history as a central moral category.

3.2 Maat in the Late Period

3.2.1 Introduction

As Lichtheim (AEL III:3) has noted, "[t]he last millennium of pharaonic civilization, the time from the end of the New Kingdom to Egypt's conversion to Christianity, is a complex period consisting of several distinct phases." With the death of Ramesses XI, Smendes assumed the throne and initiated the Third Intermediate Period, the first phase of the Late Period (Kitchen, 1986). Smendes called himself "powerful bull, beloved of Ra, whose arm is strengthened by Amen so that he may exalt Maat." This title, Grimal (1992: 312) contends, was to "effectively declare himself the heir of the Ramessid line." And, of course, the effectiveness of this claim is grounded in his declaration of his charge to "exalt Maat." After his death the country is split in two with power divided between the High Priest of Amen and the pharaoh.

The king was progressively weakened both by the arrangement of shared power with the priesthood and the deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the country. Kemet was also losing presence and power in both parts of its former empire, Kush and Asia. The Report of Wenamun, an ambassador sent to Phoenicia to bring back a consignment of fine wood, reflects this loss of power and status (Gardiner, 1973:61-76). Wenamun was neither honored nor well-received. The Syrian prince he negotiates with concedes that Amen founded Kemet first and that craftsmanship came from Kemet. But he suggests that now he has the knowledge of Kemet and thus implies he is no longer dependent on Kemet.

The end of indigenous rule comes with the rise of Libyan power under Shesonq I who had been commander-in-chief of all the armies. He had also served as advisor to King Psusennes II. The Libyans were in turn supplanted by Nubian kings, who beginning with Piankhi's conquest of Egypt in 730 B.C.E., ruled for approximately a century. The Nubians saw themselves as restorers of the ancient tradition of Kemet. Thus in art, architecture and literature, they made great efforts to uphold tradition and therefore created a renaissance of ancient Egyptian culture (O'Connor, 1983:242ff). As Grimal (1992:34) states, King Shabaka, the founder of the 25th Dynasty of Kemet "continued with Piankhi's policy of return to Egyptian values." It is he who, in searching for Old Kingdom sources of theology, brings forth the Memphite

theology. He and his successors also engage in massive temple building. They continue this renaissance until they are eventually replaced by an Assyrian invasion.

The Saite kings regain power under Psamtik I. Like the Kushite kings, Psamtik I sought to build on ancient Kemetic values, art and general achievement, creating what is called the "Saite renaissance," a period of political strength, cultural development and economic prosperity. This is also the period of massive Greek influx and marks the beginning of the coercive integration of Kemet into the Hellenistic world. Kemet is conquered by Persia in 502 B.C.E., regained independence in 404 B.C.E. and established the 28th and 29th Dynasties. It was reconquered by Persia in 341 B.C.E. then by the Greeks in 332. Rome replaced the Greeks in 30 B.C.E. and eventually Kemet gives up its heritage for Christianity and finally, Islam.

This Late Period is important in several basic ways. First, it brings Kemet in contact with the outside world in a position of weakness and thus culturally vulnerability to imposition. The coercive integration into the Hellenistic world is the most definitive example of this. Secondly, Kemet becomes the home of the most rich and varied thought in this process with the city of Alexandria serving as a center of exchange and contestation of various cultures. Thirdly, it is interesting to note that in spite of obvious and important changes, the literature reflects an impressive

continuity of cultural conceptualization and practice. As Lloyd (1983: 346) states, "[t]he means by which Egyptian civilization confronted and adapted to these circumstances present an intriguing blend of pliability and conservatism." Moreover, he continues,

> [t]here is little of surprise in yield of textual study. Concepts of gods and of the nature of man, the perception of nationality, and for the most part of the royal office can all be paralleled in earlier sources.

There is, however, he concludes, a new tendency toward the end of the Late Period to view kings differently than previously when they were viewed as divine embodiments of Maat. At this point, however, the assumption emerges that they are not automatically " . . .*ex officio* the repositories of righteousness and the allies of the Gods, but are all likely to act in ways of which the Gods disapprove." This marks the undermining of the central conception of Kemetic civilization and, of necessity, makes the discourse on Maat and kingship problematic even in its continuity. It is, perhaps, this problematic nature of kingship in relation to Maat that causes more concern than optimism in this period and leads to more discourse on the way of God (*w3t nṯr*) rather than on the strength, power and goodness of the king. It should be noted, however, that up until conquest these transformations do not take root (Lloyd, 1982). Still, the king continues to tower over ordinary persons and officials in much of the literature.

3.2.2 The Early Phase: Autobiographies

The autobiographies of the Theban priesthood of Amen offers excellent examples of the moral conceptualization and practice of this period. One such autobiography is the long text of the Fourth Prophet of Amen, Djedkhonsefankh (Janssen, 1955). It is clear from this Declaration of Virtue that Djedkhonsefankh places Amen Ra first as the fundamental referent and ground of his worthiness, saying:

> *ink im3ḫw ḫr 'Imn*
> *ḥsy '3 n nb w3st,*
> *ḥm nṯr 4-nw 'Imn-R'*
>
> I am honored before Amen
> The great favorite of the Lord of Thebes
> The Fourth Prophet of Amen Ra.

This, of course, reflects his role as priest and is, of necessity, part of his professional and moral self-portrait. But it, perhaps, also reflects, as noted above, the changed power situation mentioned above in which the king shared power with the Theban priesthood.

Djedkhonsefanhk's moral self-portrait, however, does mention the praise of the kings under whom he served and notes his loyalty and respect for him. But this reference follows not only references to Amen Re, but also references to his moral character, his family as well as his servants in his moral self-presentation. This clearly reflects the changed circumstances from not only the Old Kingdom context of the centrality of the king, but even the Middle and New Kingdom which saw a progressive shift from the priority of

reference to king as part of one's moral self-presentation. Also, the text yields an expansive variety of moral self-expressions in relationships and character development. Thus, it reflects a continuing development of moral conceptualization and its attendant moral vocabulary.

Djedkhonsefankh says:

Hail to you who will come after,
Who will be in future times!
I shall make you call me blessed (*hsy*)
For my destiny was great.
Khnum fashioned me as one effective, (*3h*)
An adviser of excellent counsel.
He made my character (*bi3t*) superior
    to others.
He steered my tongue to excellence (*bw mnh*).

I kept my mouth clean of harming him
    who harmed me,
My patience (*w3h-ib*) turned my foes
    into my friends.
I ruled my mouth, was skilled in answer,
Yet did not acquiesce (*sfn*) in evil-doing.

The people reckoned me as openhanded,
For I despised the piling up of riches.
I caused them all to greet me for
    my excellence (*mnh*).
Hand-kissing to my ka and saying of me:
They were much honored owing to (my) worth.
They found me helpful while they were on earth.
And I supply them in the desert valley.
I did not let my servants call me "our master,"
(Instead) I made myself the image of
    their father.

The good God praised me, Sekhem-kheperre-
    sotpenre,
His heirs praised me again, still more than he.
As each one reigned he was content with me,
For they perceived my worth among the masses.
The country's nobles strove to imitate me,
For my favor with the king was great.
- - - - - - - -
I did not give praise to him who flattered me.
I prevented expenses beyond the king's orders,
I protected the goods of its poor.

I put respect of its lord before them,
I restrained the arms of its robbers.
I was constant in sending reports to the king,
In cases of relieving hardships.
He gave assent to what I said,
He favored me above his courtiers.
My goodness was a sheltering refuge,
A fundament that would not ever tilt.
- - - - - - - -
When I raised a son above the rank of his father,
Their requests were fulfilled as they wished.
When I spread my wealth on everybody,
They thought (me) the equal of Hu.
When I hated slander, loved assent,
A voice was raised for them to guard them
from evil.
I was thus a god for them,
They knew my action when he bestowed favors.
When they succeeded me in the king's service,
Their rank was through me in accord with my wish.

May I see the children of their children,
While I remain on earth!
May my body be young in their descendants,
While I am here thereafter!
I shall not vanish for I know:
God acts for him whose heart is true!
- - - - - - - -
I was constant in lending grain to the Thebans,
I nourished the poor of my town.
I did not rage at him who could not pay.
I did not press him so as to seize his belongings.
I did not make him sell his goods to another,
so as to repay the debt he had made.
I satisfied (him) by buying his goods and
paying two or three times their worth.
One cannot equal what I did in any respect.
I did not quarrel with him who had robbed me.
For I knew one does not get rich by theft.
God does what he wishes.

The Maatian concepts of self-discipline, moral and professional excellence, generosity, good speech, sensitivity to and care of the vulnerable, honor among co-citizens and praise of the king are all here. What is of special significance is the self-description that he was "as a god for them." The meaning of "them" is open to debate.

Lichtheim sees it as Djedkhonsefankh's kinspeople; Janssen interprets it as courtiers; and Otto sees it as the masses. My sense is that it is an inclusive term including all he might have benefitted and thus, all three suggestions above are accommodated. But what is interesting is his appropriation of the category whose use in this way had been part of the king's spiritual and moral self-presentation. This certainly does not suggest the king's exclusive status as "*nṯr nfr*," the good god" is diminished or that a new trend has been initiated in the autobiographies. For already in the First Intermediate Period persons had defined themselves in such terms (Ockinga, 1984:82ff). But it is a significant development in this one case because of the surrounding conditions and perhaps points to the fluidity and flexibility of the situation.

Also interesting is Djedkhonsefankh's autobiography is the assertion that he transformed his enemies into friends. He says:

> I kept my mouth from harming him who harmed me.
> My patience turned my foes into friends.

This represents a heightened moral self-discipline in the first case and a new use for patience (*w3ḥ-ib*) which had been used essentially to express personal character and empathetic understanding of non-hostile others. However, here a moral vision of transformation of enemies into friends is posed and this suggests a continuously expanding moral conception of human relations.

The count and First Prophet of Amen, Nebneteru, served under the Libyans and offers another expression of the moral vision of his time (Legrain, 1914:58-62, pl.32). In his autobiographical text, he begins by locating himself, as was first done in the Old Kingdom. This essentially means establishing a context for his moral and professional excellence. Lichtheim (AEL III:18) notes that "[o]f special interest in his autobiography is Nebneteru's expression of satisfaction with his exceptionally long life, and his emphatic exhortation to the reader to enjoy life, to eschew worries and to shun the thought of death." Also of special note is that among his many titles, he states that he is a prophet of Maat three times ending his autobiography with the third reference to this. He also calls Ptah, the creator, Lord of Maat. Finally, like Paheri and others previously, he also makes reference to the heart as a god, i.e., a rule and ruler within the human person.

He says:

> I was one unique and excellent.
> Great in his town.
> Greatly respected in the temple.
> Amen appointed me door-opener of heaven,
> So that I saw his form in the horizon.
> He introduced me to the palace in private,
> So that I saw Horus in his image.
> I sought what was beneficial for my town in my time,
> My concern was for the house of God.
> He gave me rewards with praises
> He rewarded (me) as he wished.
>
> He provided me with a son to take office,
> When I entered the land of my eternity
> I saw his participation as he circled the shrine,
> As one honored by the King in the palace,

- - - - - - - -
I saw my sons as great priests,
Son after son who issued from me.
I attained the age of ninety-six,
Being healthy, without illness.
If one desires the length of my life,
One should praise God for another in my name.
- - - - - - - -
Chief seer who contents the heart of Ra-Atum in
Thebes,
Who enters the palace in private;
The eyes of the King throughout the land,
Who comes praised from the palace;
A mouth skilled in confidential speech,
Provider of Upper Egypt in his time;
Whose coming is awaited in the palace,
Whose wisdom has made his ka prosperous.
The royal secretary for Upper Egypt, Nebneteru,
- - - - - - - -
I addressed the people in a manner they liked,
I judged everyone according to his character,
I gave attention to what he wished.
I spent my lifetime in my heart's delight,
Without worry, without illness.
I made my days festive with wine and myrrh,
I banished weariness from my heart.
- - - - - - - -
Happy is he who spends his life
In following his heart with the blessings of Amen!
- - - - - - - -
How the land mourned when I passed away,
My relatives not differing from the people!
Do not worry because the like will happen,
It is sad to live with head on knee!
Do not be tightfisted with what you own,
Do not act empty-handed with your property!
Do not sit in the hall of heart's concern,
Predicting the morrow before it has come!
Do not deny the eye its water,
Lest it come unawares!
Do not sleep with the disk in the east,
Do not thirst at the side of beer!
The west seeks to hide from him who follows
his heart,
The heart is a god,
The stomach is its shrine,
It rejoices when the limbs are festive!
- - - - - - - -

Prophet of Amen in Ipet-sut,
Mayor, vizier, overseer of the companions of
the palace,

Setem-priest, leader of all kilt-wearers,
Judge, mouth of Nekhen, intimate of Horus
    in the palace,
Prophet of Maat, Neseramun, justified,
Born of Muthetepti.

Also of interest in Nebneteru's autobiography is his extended discourse on living a life of happiness following one's heart (*šms ib*), a concept well established in Kemetic discourse (Lorton, 1968). His conception of a good life includes, in addition to the standard moral practice, a "following his heart with the blessing of Amen," as well as a generosity and a joyful living of life to its fullest. This conception rejects apprehension of death and tomorrow and poses in its stead, a life well-lived with the love of people and the blessings of Amen, a situation which presupposes and requires a morally grounded life.

3.2.3 The Nubian Period: Autobiographies

As noted above, the Nubians were very committed to Egyptian ancient tradition. Thus, they engaged in a sustained process to appropriate the past for the benefit of the present, creating a renaissance in classical art, architecture, royal tradition and literature. The Shabaka Text or Memphite Theology represents the most well-known example of this process in literature which is called "archaizing" (Brunner, 1970). But the autobiographies also offer an excellent example of using the past as a foundation for the present, a process which continued through the Saite period which followed.

The autobiography of Harwa, the High Steward of the Divine Wife of Amen, Amenirdis, daughter of King Kashta is a classic example of the synthesis of the past and present. His autobiography combines the ancient and the new into the paradigmatic literary piece of this genre for this time (Gunn and Engelbach, 1931; Gunn, 1934). Harwa says in his moral self-presentation:

> I am an excellent noble,
> Equipped with his blessings,
> One whose virtue the Two Lands know;
> A refuge for the poor,
> A float for the drowning,
> A ladder for one who is in the abyss.
> One who speaks for the wretched,
> Who assists the unfortunate, and
> Who helps the oppressed by his good deed;
> The one honored by the King, Harwa.
> - - - - - - - -
>
> I am a noble for whom one should act,
> One firm of heart to the end of life.
> I am one beloved of his city,
> Praised of his district,
> Kind-hearted to his towns.
> I have done what people love and divinities praise,
> One truly worthy who had no fault,
> Who gave bread to the hungry and clothes
>   to the naked,
> One who removed pain and suppressed wrongdoing;
> Who buried the revered ones, supported the old,
> And removed the need of the have-not.
> A shade for the child,
> A helper for the widow,
> One who gave rank even to an infant.
> I did these things knowing their weight,
> And their reward from the Lord of Things:
> To abide in men's mouth without ever ending,
> To be well remembered in years after.
> - - - - - - - -
> The prince, count, honored by his lord, in favor
>   with his lady;
> Kind of speech, sweet of words, well disposed to
>   great and small;
> Who gives advice to the timid in trouble, when
>   his witnesses stand up to accuse.

One open-handed who nourished everyone who
provided the have-not with what he lacked;
The chief chamberlain of God's Hand, the
King's friend, Harwa, justified; he says:

I speak to you who will come after,
New ones in millions of years;
My Lady made me great when I was a small boy,
She advanced my position when I was a child.
The King sent me on missions as a youth,
Horus, Lord of the Palace, distinguished me.
Every mission on which their majesties sent me,
I carried it out correctly.
And never told a lie about it.
I did not rob, I did no wrong,
I slandered no one before them.
I entered the Presence to resolve difficulties,
To assist the unfortunate.
I have given goods to the have-not,
I endowed the orphan in my town.
My reward is being remembered for my beneficence,
My ka enduring because of my kindness-Harwa.

Harwa begins with his virtues and only later locates himself in terms of his city or community. This differs from Old Kingdom texts for the most part, but represents a style one finds after the First Intermediate Period. His declarations of virtue include the old and new. He has done what people love and God praises, and he has declared the classic virtues toward the vulnerable, i.e., giving bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked, water to the thirsty and a boat to those without one.

New virtues include a standard declaration of being "a refuge for the wretched, a float for the drowning and a ladder for one who is in the abyss (*ibw n inḏ, ḏb3 n mḥi, m3ḳt n ntt m mḏwt*). Harwa also reaffirms the moral obligation of the living to make offerings for the departed stating that "the breath of your mouth profits the silent

without costs to your possessions." He ends with a declaration of honorable service to king and mistress, God's wife, and with an aspiration of being remembered and enduring for eternity.

Another excellent autobiographical example of this period is the DOV of Akhamenru, High Steward of the Adorer of God, Padihornesu (Lichtheim, 1948:176ff). He says:

ink s‘ḥ iḳr ‘pr m ḥsw.f
‘ḳ ẖr ḥ3t pr ẖr pḥwy
sr m ḥ3t rḫyt wr m i3wt(.f) ‘3 m s‘ḥ(.f)
ibw n ind, ḏb3 n mḥ m3ḳt n nty mḏwt
swr wi ḥnwt.i m ḥwn nḏs
sẖnt.s ṡt.i m wḏhw
sṯn wi Ḥr nb ‘ḥ
ir wpt ṅbt h3b.n wi ḥm.sn r.s ir.n.i
s(t) r bw m3‘

I am a worthy noble equipped with his honors,
One who goes in first and comes out last;
An official at the head of the people; great in his offices and high in his rank,
A refuge for the distressed, a float for the drowning,
A ladder for one who is in the abyss.
My Lady made me great while I was (still) a little boy.
She advanced my position while I was a child.
Horus, Lord of the Palace, distinguished me,
Every mission on which their majesties sent me, I executed it rightly.

It is Lichtheim's (1948:178) opinion that the texts of Akhamenru and other texts from the 21st to the 26th Dynasties reflect a conceptualization and archaism which have prototypes in the Middle and New Kingdom. She notes that whereas the Pyramid Texts were copied virtually verbatim in this period, "the texts of the Middle and New Kingdoms were

literary sources which were worked over and incorporated in the living tradition."

Finally, offering another example of autobiography of the period is the Governor of Upper Egypt and the Fourth Prophet of Amen, Montemhet (Legrain, 1914, III, 88-89, pls. 46 & 47A; Wreszinski, 1916; Leclant, 1961). He served both King's Taharqa and Tantamani of the Nubian Period and served also under Psamtik I, the founder of the Saite Dynasty. Montemhet's autobiography contains not only moral and professional self-presentations, but also prayers, hymns and offering requests. Lichtheim (AEL III:29) has also noted that several of Montemhet's statues on which these inscriptions occur "are outstanding works of art by virtue of their powerful and expressive modelling." In fact, they contain "a vital artistic energy" which is expressed most definitively in Nubian royal portrait sculpture (see Wreszinski, 1916).

Montemhet essentially defines his moral personality in terms of his work as a priest, and as "a noble for whom one should act, a truly esteemed one, beloved of his lord," Amen. He reports his work of restoration of the temple of Mut, renewing it "so that it was more beautiful than before." Likewise, he says:

> I rebuilt the divine boat of Osiris in Abydos when I found it fallen into ruin. My heart did not grow weary and my arms did not fall slack until I renewed (*sm3wy*) what I found ruined.

Moreover, he calls for a reciprocity in pronouncing his name after passing, saying that it is what he has done for others and "what Amen, lord of heaven loves." He also notes his good deeds as ruler in the Theban district. He says:

> Let me make you aware of my good deeds:
> I was count of the Theban district,
> And all of Upper Egypt was in my charge,
> The southern boundary was at Yebu,
> The northern one was at Un.
> I gave my benefits to Upper Egypt,
> And my love to Lower Egypt;
> The citizens longed to see me,
> Like Ra when he shows himself,
> So great was my beneficence,
> So grand was my excellence!

A final inclusion in the autobiographical inscriptions of Montemhet is a prayer to Amen. It is a concise and sensitive prayer of both praise and supplication which stresses the ancient desire for good health, love of the people, a good burial and a name which endures. Moreover, it offers an important example of the religious vision of this period.

> Hail to you, Amen,
> Maker of humankind,
> God who created all that exists!
> Beneficent king,
> First one of the Two Lands,
> Who planned the eternity he made.
> Great in power, mighty in awe
> One whose forms are exalted above
> other divinities.
> Great of strength,
> One who subdues the rebels,
> Whose horn attacks the evildoers.
> I bow down to your name, May it be
> my physician,
> May it remove my body's illness,
> May it drive away pain from me,
> May your horn be aflame, the arm moving.

May He put love of me in the hearts
of the people
So that all may be fond of me.
May He grant me a good burial
In the cemetery of my city,
For the sacred land is in His grasp.
May He make my name last like the stars
of heaven and
My statue last like one of His followers.
May my ka be remembered in His temple night
and day,
May I renew my youth like the moon, and
May my name not be forgotten in the years
forever after,
The name of Amen's fourth prophet, count of
the city, Montemhet, in health.

3.2.4 The Saite Period: Autobiographies

The autobiography of Ibi, Steward of the Wife of God, Nictoris, offers an excellent example during the Saite Period of the continued revival of the Memphite Tradition during the Saite Period which was so important to the Nubian period. Ibi's autobiography represents the peak of the archaizing renaissance as expressed in the tombs of high officials, of both the Nubian and Saite periods and in "the literature of the time both in the systematization of the royal recitations in the style of the Victory Stelae of Piankhi and in the continued use of traditional language in official texts" (Grimal, 1992:357). His text thus reads like a text of the 6th Dynasty when Maat was a category of central reference and the discourse on virtue was rooted in and revolved around this fundamental moral category. The text reads:

. . .The prince and count, truly an intimate
of the King whom he loves, Ibi, the
justified;

He says:
O you who live on earth. Those who exist and will come after.
I will recount to you my good deeds which I have done on earth. For I know it is useful . . . .
I did what people love and the divine ones praise. I am here having come to the city of eternity, for I did good on earth.
I have come from my city
I have come from my district. I have descended into my grave.
I spoke truth (*m3't*) and did justice (*m3't*) which God loves.
I judged justly between the weak and the strong.
I did not allow one greater to take from one more humble than he was.
I made this tomb from my rightful means so that it might be well for me before the Great God forever.
I was generous to everyone, a helper to the fatherless. I nourished the hungry when he came to the prime minister (as) a petitioner.
I satisfied the need of a man (even) as a child so it would not happen that he tread upon the place of the widow.
I turned my face toward the timid when his case came to be heard and his tongue appeared with an effective word.
I rejected no one with a petition.
My case was not heard.
There was no accusation and no complaint against me.
No one found fault with me.
I was cheerful with everyone, free of rudeness to anyone who showed himself crude.
I thought of eternity. I looked to the boundaries (of time) so that my name might be good in Thebes forever and eternally in the mouth of the living.
The prince and royal seal-bearer from Lower Egypt, great in favor, great in love, one who keeps anger from the palace,
Who enters the place where the King is with good; one who brings peace to his city and district. (Otto, 1954:154)

The text continues with a recounting of Ibi's service to the king much as in the Old Kingdom when the professional and

moral aspects of the autobiographies merged into an integral moral self-presentation.

3.2.5 The Persian Periods and the Last Independence

The Persians under Cambyses invaded and quickly overran Kemet in 525 B.C.E. They deposed Psamtik III, the last king of the Saite period, and eventually executed him. The Persians rule of Egypt was established in two different periods, the first in the period of 525-404 B.C.E. and the second period 343-332 B.C.E. The first period was marked by continuous revolt, and eventually the Egyptians won independence for the last time between 404-343 B.C.E. under the 28th, 29th and 30th Dynasty (Grimal, 1992:Chapter 15).

During this time the Egyptians are plagued by both internal struggles between local rulers and families of the Delta and the constant threat of reconquest by the Persian Empire. In this context, Egypt allies itself with Greece which is fiercely anti-Persian and keeps Persia at bay for a while. This effort is also aided by the rise of Achoris who united the Egyptian armies under one ruler and for three years, 385-383 B.C.E. thwarted Persian efforts at reconquest. With his death, Egypt fell again into dynastic chaos, but Nectanebo soon united the country and beat back a Persian army supplemented by Greeks who now sent one of their most competent generals to lead their auxiliaries in the Persian forces.

Nectanebo presided over an Egyptian revival in art and literature as well as building construction. Eventually, however, the Persians, aided again by Greeks, reconquered Egypt. And King Nectanebo fled south taking refuge with a prince of Lower Nubia. This marked the end of Egyptian independence and the last time it would be self-ruling. The Persians ruled until 332 B.C.E. when Alexander of Greece defeated the Persians and took control of Egypt. In turn, the Greeks were eventually defeated by the Romans in 30 B.C.E.

Certainly, one of the most significant autobiographical texts from the first period of Persian rule is that of the chief physician, Udjahorrense (Tulli, 1941; Brugsch, 1884 IV:636-642). Udjahorrense had served the last two Saite kings, Amasis and Psamtik III, and witnessed the Persian invasion. He thus stands astride the fall of the Saite rule and the rise of Persian domination. In his autobiography, he talks of his appointments as chief physician by the Persian emperor Cambyses, and how he composed the king's titulary, served as administrator, commander of the navy and in other posts, and restored the temple of Neith. He speaks also of Darius I sending him back to Egypt but does not tell us why he left there.

His declaration of virtues are concise and inclusive and gives us an idea of the moral values of the time. He says:

ink s nfr m niwt.f
nḥm.i rmṯ.s m nšni ʿ3 wr
ḫpr.f m t3 ḏr.f
iw n ḫpr mitt.f m t3 pn im
nḏ.i m3r m-ʿ wsr
nḥm.n(.i) snḏ sp.f ḫpr
ir.n(.i) n.sn 3ḫ nb
iw tr pw n ir n.sn
\- - - - - - - -
ink im3ḫw n it-f ḥs(y) n mwt
imy-ib n snw.f
smn.n.i n.s i3t ḥm nṯr
rdit.n(.i) n.sn 3ḫt 3ḫt m wḏ n ḥm.f m 3wt ḏt
ir.n(.i) ḳrst nfr m iwty ḳrst
sʿnḫ ḫrd.sn nb
smn.n(.i) prw.sn
ir.n.i n.sn 3ḫw nb mi(i)tn s3
is nšn ḫpr m sp3t.tn
m-m nsn ʿ3 wr ḫpr m t3 ḏr.f

I am a good man from my city.
I rescued its peoples from the very
    great turmoil
Which happened in the whole land the like of
    which had not happened in this land (before)
I protected the weak from the strong.
I rescued the timid when misfortune happened
    to him.
I did for them every good and profitable thing.
When it was time to act for them.
\- - - - - - - -
I am one honored by his father, praised by his
    mother, the favorite of his brothers.
I established them in the office of priest.
I gave them a profitable field by the command
    of his majesty for all eternity.
I made a good tomb for one who had none.
I supported all their children.
I established all their houses.
I did for them all good,
And profitable things like a father for his son,
When the turmoil happened in this district,
In the midst of the very great turmoil that happened in
    the whole land.

Note how Udjahorrense locates himself in the context of his town to begin his moral self-presentation. This, of course, is a tradition initiated in the Old Kingdom in which one's community and its members were employed as witnesses

for one's moral claims of character and practice. Udjahorrense's narrative of moral action is set in the context of the turmoil of invasion by the Persians and he reports his aid to the needy, his family and the larger community in this time of stress and strain. Notable also is his detailed account of providing tombs, supporting children, establishing houses and "doing every good and profitable thing for them as a father does for a son."

Two things are important about this. First, unlike other declarations of virtues, this one is based not on declarations of moral qualities, but essentially on moral action. Except for the standard assertions of honor, praise and favorite status among family members and the initial claim of being a good man in his city, the traditional claims of personal virtues are absent. Instead, he defines himself morally by what he does, socially, foregoing the usual moral presentation through a long list of personal attributes. Secondly, Udjahorrense makes his moral claims in the framework of one of the most paradigmatic relationships of Kemetic society, i.e., the father-son relationship. This is probably meant to show intimacy and unquestionable obligation and dedication.

During the last independent period of Kemetic history, the concern for and commitment to Maatian practice remained strong and practice, such as that of Udjahorrense was often cited in autobiographies. Likewise, moral qualities were

also cited and, as noted before, were more often stated than a given practice. The autobiography of the official Wahibra-merneith offers an example of the prominence of the listing of personal moral qualities with only brief reference to actions (Vercoutter, 1962:93ff, pl. xiv). He says of himself:

ink s‘ḥ iḳr ḫnt sp3wt
w3ḥ-ib rḫ bw-nfr
m3r-spw iḳr sḫrw dns
‘pr m rḫ gm ṯs m g3w.f
s3w (ḳsn) gm gr ḥss m ḳi.f
ḏd nfr wḥm nfr
irt ḥsst nṯr.f
irt ḥsst nb.f
ir.mr rmṯ
s m3‘ pw mr nṯrw nbw

I am a worthy noble, a pre-eminent in
the districts
Patient, one who knows the good
Prosperous, worthy, weighty in plans
Skilled in knowledge, one who finds the
missing maxim
A solver of problems, discreet, praised in
his appearance.
One who speaks good and repeats good,
Who does what his God praises,
Who does what his lord praises,
Who does what the people love,
A man of Maat, beloved of all the divinities.

The vocabulary, then, stands out in its expressiveness of moral qualities. Worthiness and location are the introductory concepts and the categories "praise" and "love" undergird the motivation and values. Moral actions are also expressed but are generalized as those which God and the king praise and the people love.

Another official and priest living in the last period of Kemetic independence, Djedher, reaffirms the commitment

to doing what the people and God praises (Lichtheim, 1992: 94-95). He addresses Hathor saying, "My heart is engraved with care of you. I did what your ka loves." He further states that he is a truthful (*m3ʿ-ib*), gracious (*im3-ib*) and good-natured (*nfr-ki*) to all. And he poses as a reward for righteousness: a long life, happiness, love and a good burial.

Finally, the autobiography of Somtutefnakht offers a representation of moral values at the end of the last period of Kemetic independence, the reconquest by Persia, and then, the defeat of the Persians by Alexander of Macedonia and Greece (Urk. II:1-6). Somtutefnakht, a chief priest, essentially offers an autobiography which is given in the context of his service to the Divinity and develops it in terms of the reciprocity of relations between God and humans. He begins by defining himself as the Divinity's servant and then describes the loyalty and practice which flow from that. He says to the Divinity:

> *ink ḥm.k ib.i ḥr mw.k*
> *mḥ.n.i ib.i im.k*
> *n sḫpr.n.i niwt wpw niwt.k*
> *n wš.n.i m rdit b3w.s ḫr ḥr nb*
> *ib.i ḥr ḥḥy bw m3ʿ m pr.k rʿ nb*
> *ir.n.k n.i m nfr.sn n ḥḥ n sp* (Urk. II:3.5-11)

> I am your servant, my heart is on your water.
> I filled my heart with you.
> I sustained no city except your city.
> I did not fail to place its power above all.
> My heart sought Maat in your house everyday,
> And you gave me a reward for it a million times.

The essence of this declaration is piety and the search after Maat each day in this context. This reflects, of course, a priestly status but also prefigures the more extensive autobiography of the next period where Maatian ethics and piety are interwoven in even more detail and the relationship between the Divinity and humans are a constantly expressed concern.

One final interesting thing in this declaration is the passage:

> You distinguished me among millions,
> When you turned your back on Egypt.
> You put love of me in the heart of
> the Asian ruler,
> And his courtiers praised God for me.
> (Urk. II:3.14-17)

This passage represents a belief that the Persian conquest was God's turning his back on Egypt. In earlier times, defeat and chaos were seen as Maat being replaced by isfet as in the Books of Contemplation. Thus, the solution was for the king to return Maat to its place and expel isfet. However, there is no suggestion of that here. Even the Victory Stela of Merenptah, with its reference to "God turning his face toward Egypt again," contains within it the conception of the king returning Maat to its place (Spiegelberg, 1896). But in this case the assumption is that the *b3w* or corrective power of God, once essentially directed toward persons as in the Ramessid Age, could be and was now also directed against the nation of Kemet itself. And there

is no mention of a king who will, as in the past, come and return Maat to its place.

Thus, assumption of power by a new king does not automatically mean a return of Maat. On the contrary, Somtutefnakht seems to assert that the conquest and assumption of power by the Asian ruler is clear evidence of God's turning his back on Kemet. This reflects the eventual ability to criticize kings in the Persian and Greek periods as distinct from the office itself and points to a process of a nation coming to terms with the continuing problems of disorder and conquest and the concomitant need to expel its intellectual horizons in matters of society and state (Lloyd, 1982).

Our author also notes the positive intervention of God in history on the side of nation and person saying:

> When you (God) drove out those of Asia,
> They slew a great number at my sides,
> (But) no one raised his arm against me.
> (Urk. II:4.4-6)
> - - - - - - - - -
> As my beginning was good through you
> May you make my end complete
> Giving me a long life in happiness.
> (Urk. II:4.17-5.2)

Thus, Somtutefnakht poses both the positive and negative or corrective aspects of God's intervention in history. The turning of his back on Egypt brought in the Persians; his turning face toward them was expressed in his driving the greatly disliked Persians out. Eventually, brutal Greek

rule would cause a similar wish for divine intervention to drive them out (Lloyd, 1982; Spiegelberg, 1914).

3.2.6 The Graeco-Roman Period

3.2.6.1 The Autobiographies

As noted above, the increase in encounter and exchange expanded the intellectual horizon of ancient Egypt and posed a creative challenge on one level for contestation, absorption and expanded contribution. Certainly, the texts found in the tomb of Petosiris represent one of the most expansive presentations of Maatian moral philosophy in this period including the Sebait (Lefebvre, 1923-1924). Petosiris, a high Priest of Djehuti (Thoth) at Hermapolis, served during the second Persian domination, and probably was still in office at the beginning of the Greek domination. His tomb was expanded and further decorated by his son and grandson during the reign of Ptolemy I.

Containing passages from the Book of Coming Forth By Day and the Pyramid Texts, as well as a collection of hymns to Ra and declarations of virtue and piety, the tomb is a literary treasure trove. The long text of Petosiris begins with his note that he is leaving his autobiography in that section of the chapel in the tomb which he has dedicated to his father, Sishu. He then lists his many offices and ends with the traditional acknowledgement of his parents. The second part of his autobiographical inscription is an appeal

to the living, a standard part of the form which is optional. He says then:

i hm ntr nb w'b nb rh-ht nb
'k.sn r st3w tn m33.sn ist pn
dw3 ntr n ir.f dw3 ntr n ir.sn
hr nty ink im3hw n it.f hsy n mwt
im3-ib n snw
hws.i ist pn hr st3w tn
iw gs n3 b3w '3w nty im
n mr(t) dm rn it(.i) hn' sn(.i) wr
s'nh s dm rn.f

O every prophet, every priest, every scholar
Who enter this cemetery and see this tomb,
Praise God for him who acts (for me).
Praise God for them who act (for me).
For I was one honored by his father,
Praised by his mother
Kind to his brothers and sisters.
I built this tomb in the cemetery,
Beside the great souls who are there,
In order that my father's name might
be pronounced
and that of my elder brother
For a man is made to live when his name
is pronounced.
(Lefebvre, 1924 II:53-54, no. 81)

Here Petosiris expresses the ancient virtue of filial responsibility and expresses the power of the expressed name as both a way to revive and cause a person to endure. The next section includes teaching on worthiness to enter into immortality. After that is a long professional presentation which will be omitted here. Concerning worthiness for immortality, he says:

imntt dmy n iwty wn.f
dw3 ntr n s ph sw
nn spr s nb r.s
wpw ib.f 'k3 m ir(t) m3't
n tnw wšw r bw3w
wpw gm.n.tw m iwty wn.f
iwsw hn' kdt m-b3h nb nhh
n šw n tm hsb.t(w).f

Ḏhwty m ''n ḥr mḥ3t
r ḥsb s nb m irt.n.f ḥr tp t3
wn.i ḥr mw n nb Ḫmnw ḏr msw.i
sḫr.f nb wn m ib.i

The West (Amenta) is the abode of the
     blameless.
Praise God for one who has reached it.
No one reaches it unless his heart is
     upright in doing Maat
There is no distinction made between the
     humble and the great
Only that one who is found free from fault
When the balance and weight are before the
     lord of eternity.
No one is exempt from the assessment.
Djehuti as baboon upon the balance will
     assess each person by what he has
     done on earth
I was on the water of the lord of Khnum
     since my birth
All his counsel was in my heart.
     (Lefebvre, 1924 II:54.81,16-24)

This discourse on post-mortem judgment, in which the humble and the great are all judged and only the blameless (*iwty wn.f*) reach Amenta (the place of immortality), calls to mind the First Intermediate Period Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara as well as the judgment discourse in the Book of Coming Forth By Day which evolved in the New Kingdom. It reflects a continuity of tradition which spans over 2,000 years around the question of the Maatian ground of immortality.

In the texts of both Petosiris, and his father, Sishu, the category Maat is still used and operative as the ground for a moral life and the criteria of judgment after death. But instead of frequent reference to Maat, the term "way of God, *w3t nṯr*" is used increasingly as a synonym for Maatian

thought and practice in this period. This particular category was first used in the Middle Kingdom and appears in the text of Dua-khety in which the father says to the son, "I have set you on the way of God" (AEL 1975:191). Its variation in other places and periods is the way of life (*w3t n ʿnḫ*) as in the Sebait of Amenomope (Grumach, 1972) and in Sishu's text. Also, the Sebait of Ptahhotep in the Old Kingdom talks of Maat as a way even the ignorant may benefit from and follow. Maat, then, is a way of life which is at the same time a way of God (Couroyer, 1949).

Sishu's text begins with the standard professional introduction but his appeal differs from the standard biography. For instead of the appeal for offerings and remembrance, he appeals to visitors and passersby of his tomb to let him lead them to the way of life, *w3t ʿnḫ*, later also called the way of God, *w3t nṯr*, as mentioned above. He says:

> *i ʿnḫw tpyw t3*
> *wnyw ntyw r ḫpr*
> *ii.sn iw ḫ3st m33.sn*
> *m33.sn ḥ3t pn sw3.sn ḥr.f*
> *imi sšm.ṯn wi n w3t ʿnḫ*
> *sḳdyt n ḥr m3ʿ nn wn š3w*
> *pḥ.ṯn dmi nt ḏ3mw*
> *nn ḥw ib ḫr tn*
> *ink sʿḥ iḳr n wn.f*
> *twt n sḏm ḏd nḏrw imyw*
> *gm.ṯn 3ḫt.sn*
> *w3t nfrt šms nṯr pw*
> *ḥsy pw sšm ib.f r.s*
> *ḏd(.i) n ṯn m ḫpr im.i*
> *rdi(.i) šs3.ṯn m sḫr n nṯr*
> *rdi(.i) wb3.ṯn m rḫ b3w.f*
> *iy.n.i dy r niwt nt nḥḥ*
> *iri.i bw nfr tp t3*

mḥ.i ibi.i ḥr w3t nṯr
ḏr rnp.i r mn min
sḏr.n.i b3w.f m ib.i
dw3.n.i ḥr ir(t) mr k3.f
ir.n.i m3‘t bwt.n.i isft
iw.i rḫ.k(wi) ‘nḫ.f im.s ḥtp.f ḥr.s
ir.n.i w‘b 3b k3.f
n ḫnms.n.i ḫm b3w nṯr
rhn.n.tw n ir ḥr mw.f
n iṯ.i ḫt n rmṯ nb
nn ir.i sp ḏw r s
niwtyw nb ḥr dw3 nṯr n.i
ir.n.i nn iw.i sḫ3 spr nṯr m-ht nn
iw.i rh.k(wi) hrw n nbw m3‘t
r pḫ3.nw ḫr wḏ‘
dw3 nṯr r mr nṯr
spr.f ḥt-k3.f n iyw
(Lefebvre, 1924 II:83.116,2-6)

O you who live on earth
And who will be born
Who will come to this desert
Who will see this tomb and pass by it
Come, let me lead you to the way of life
That you may sail with a good wind and
not be stranded
That you may reach the abode of generations
without coming to grief
I am a worthy noble without fault
If you hear my words and hold fast to them
You will discover their worth
The good way is serving God
Blessed is one whose heart leads them to it.
I speak to you about what happened to me.
I will cause you to know the plan of God.
I will cause you to perceive the knowledge
of his power.
I have come here to the town of eternity,
Having done good upon the earth
Having filled my heart with the way of God,
From my youth until this day.
I lay down with his might in my heart,
I arose to do his ka's wish
I did Maat and hated wrong-doing
For I know he lives by it (Maat) and
is pleased with it
I was the priest his ka desired,
I did not befriend one who did not
know the might of God,
But trusted one who acts on his water.
I did not seize the property of any person
I never did harm to anyone

> All citizens praised God for me.
> I did these things, for I was mindful I
>   would reach God after death.
> And I knew the day of the lords of Maat,
> When they separate in judgment!
> One praises God for him who loves God,
> He will reach his ka-mansion unharmed.

Sishu has used the way of life, the way of God and the doing of Maat interchangeably. For indeed, Maat is the way of God, i.e., what he loves, wills, praises and is pleased by, and thus a way of life in that it promises success and happiness on earth and immortality after death. The phrase "the day of the lords of Maat" is new and is a synonym for "day of judgment" and "day of arrival." All of these refer to the post-mortem judgment and the requirement of righteousness, Maat, for immortality. Again, we see continuity in change with ethical vision and values which were introduced and established in the Old Kingdom continuously developing in all periods. Thus, culmination in self-conscious and increasingly expressed integration of ethics and piety in the New Kingdom continues to develop and maintain itself to the end of the Late Period and thus to the end of Kemetic society.

It is important to note that in the Late Period there is an increasing number of women's autobiographies. They offer both similarity and difference and thus add to the rich and varied character of Kemetic autobiographical texts. Three such texts are those of the Lady Ta-Sheryet-en-Aset, the Lady Ta-Aset, and the Lady Ta-Habet. All of these come

from Akhmim and are the Late Period of Greek domination or beginning of the period of Roman domination.

The Lady Ta-Sheryet-en-Aset begins her autobiography with recognition of her mother the Lady Ta-Sheryet-en-Khons and with the statement "I am glorifying God with good (words)" (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:205-213). After a long series of blessings by various divinities and a customary appeal for offerings and libation, she says:

> I am one who is (like) a herdsman (?) whose
> bull is missing,
> A youth whose cows perished (here) in the
> cemetery as a daughter of her father
> among the descendants of the prophet
> priests,
> One true of heart, benevolent of disposition
>
> Celebrated for a character of the ideal
> pattern of Khnum
> Without wishing (even that of Tefnut)
> I was vigilant concerning God without lack
> of respect and without negligence
> . . . .beside my husband (?) by the destiny
> which united me with him.
> But you shall not grieve over what happened
> to me, inasmuch the cemetery is a way by
> which the divine powers journey to
> earth (?) and
> A person on earth sets out for eternity.
> O you who live now, take heed of my words
> And you will reach the desert valley very
> happily
> Put evil thoughts out of your hearts,
> Make your hearts festive with wine
> and myrrh
> And enjoy your life in pleasure
> For extremely happy is he who has enlarged
> his life in following his heart.
> For he who knows his heart will never
> be unsuccessful.
> (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:205.N7-13)

The Lady Ta-Sheryet-en-Aset brings a sense of loss to the autobiography which on the whole men tend not to do.

Autobiographical texts by and for other women and for children who died young also express this sense of pain and tragedy. The text of Taimhotep who lived during the reign of Cleopatra VII and died at the age of thirty, leaving a husband and three daughters and a son, offers "the longest and most explicit of such laments over death found in Egyptian biographical inscriptions" (AEL III, 1980:59ff; Brugsch, 1884 V:918-927). Also, the texts of Isenkhebe and Thorekh, son of Petosiris, fall within this genre (AEL III, 1980:58-59; 52-54).

The ancient Egyptian autobiography had evolved as a moral and professional self-presentation which carried within it a celebration of success and an explicit or implicit expression of happiness at the end of one's life. Thus, the introduction of the element of tragedy, i.e., a premature death, compelled the development of the autobiography so that it could also express a more sober and restrained tone. Lady Ta-Sheryet-en-Aset offers an excellent example of the synthesized text in which she declares her achieved moral qualities but at the same time expresses and shares her sense of loss. Moreover, she reaffirms the autobiography as celebration by urging the readers not to mourn her but to follow their hearts and enjoy life. For she says, the cemetery "is a way by which the divine powers come to earth and a person on earth sets out for eternity, *igrt pw w3t šm*

nṯrw r t3 wn s ḥr t3 sbi n nḥḥ" (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982: 205.N11).

Lady Ta-Aset also has a very long and excellent autobiographical text (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:189-192). She too introduces herself first through the introduction of her parents, locating herself first in family. Then she gives praise to Osiris, the divinity over the Otherworld, and introduces herself as the Hathor Ta-Aset. For the most part through Kemetic history and after the Middle Kingdom, the deceased were called Osiris X, but as was practiced during this period, one had also the option of calling oneself Hathor, the divinity of love, music and dance, and now of the departed, i.e., Mistress of the West.

Lady Ta-Aset, then, says to Osiris, Lord of the Otherworld, "I am your servant beloved of your heart. May you give me love in every heart and a good burial in the cemetery as is done for one honored . . . ." After blessings from the divinities and an appeal to the living for offerings and remembrance through pronouncing her name, she says:

> *ḥr ir n ḳsn bw nfr*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *mnw pw ḏd b(w) iḳr*
> *wnn ir r ir n.f*
> *ink st n dw3.s*
> *. . .st n sw3š(.s)*
> *sw3 ḥr mṯn sbi ḥr w3t im3ẖ(yw)*
> *rdi(.s) mw nṯr n ib.s iw.s m nḫn*
> *iw ḏr ꜥḥꜥw.s*
> *m3ꜥ ib ḫr nṯrw nṯrwt*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *s3t (i)t.s*
> *špss m fḳ ḏd ḥ3 n m ḫt nb*
> *w3ḏ ḳd nfr bit wr mrwt ḫr bw nb*

ʿḳ3-ib ḫr špsw m3ʿ-ib r nḏsw
snfr wnnw m tp-rw.s nmḥw m iš(t)w(.s)
- - - - - - - -
nn n(ḥ).i irf iḫt mʿ ṯn wp iw ṯ3w r.ṯn
ḏr.ntt ʿnḫ ntywt mdw.t(w) rn.sn
wnn ir r ir n.f
mnw pw ḏd b(w) iḳr n ʿbʿ
n m3ṯ ḥr ʿwy ṯn
s3ḫ(.f) wi sḫ3tw rn.f
ir nb ir(.f) n.f mitt
irtw r ir ẖnt
ḏr rk nṯrw r min
(wbn Rʿ) ḥr 3 gmḥ ḥr ḏb3 sp n ir s(w)
iw rf rdit sw m ibw ṯn
nṯr špss wr 3ʿ mrwt
šms.n.i ḥr tp t3

(Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:191.J4-15)

Doing good is not difficult . . .
just speaking good is a monument.
For indeed one who does it (for another) is
actually doing (it) for himself.
I am a woman worthy of being praised
. . .a woman worthy of being honored
One who set out on the way and travelled
on the way of the honored ones.
One who put devotion to God in her
heart when she was a child
And has (held firm) her whole life.
One true of heart to the gods and goddesses
- - - - - - - -
A (true) daughter of her father
One generous in gifts to one who said
"would that I had" about anything.
Wholesome of character, good of disposition
great of love with everyone
Straightforward with the rich and just
to the poor.
One who (still) helps the living with
her precepts and the poor with her
property.
- - - - - - - -
Now I request of you nothing except the
mere breath of your mouth
For those who are yonder live when their
names are pronounced.
And surely he who is doing (something for
others) is (actually) doing it for
himself.
(Indeed) it is a monument to say a good
deed and (this) is not an exaggeration.
Nor is it a granite slab on your arms.

He who glorifies me, his name will be remembered.
For everyone who acts (for others) the same
is done for him.
And it is done according to what was done
before
Since the time of the God till today
Surely, Ra rises and sees and repays a deed
to one who does it.
May he place it (the good deed) in your
hearts
(This) august God, (this) Prince great of
love
Whom I have served the earth.

In the closing of her declaration of virtues, Ta-Aset defines her legacy in three basic ways: 1) as a moral one in terms of precepts or teachings (*tp-rw*); 2) as a material legacy, i.e., property for the poor and; 3) as an ongoing legacy which "still helps the living." This is an important contribution to our understanding of moral conceptions of this period, especially when we join it with the corpus of other declarations of virtue. Certainly, one of the most important contributions to the moral portrait of her times is the stress on reciprocity as a cardinal value. This is summed up in the phrase "one who is doing good (for others) is actually doing (it) for himself."

Vernus (1985:71) translates this standard moral assertion as "celui qui agit sera quelqu'un pour qui on agit--one who acts will be one for whom one acts." But De Meulenaere (1975:34) translates it as "celui qui agira (en ma faveur) agira pour lui, cest-à-dire celui qui me fait du bien en bénéficiera lui-meme--one who acts for me acts for himself--that is to say, one who does good for me will

benefit himself." Thus, I have translated the phrase as "one who does good for others is actually doing it for himself." Joined to this is the attendant moral perception that "doing good is not difficult" and that "just speaking good is a monument for one who does it." Again, we see that stress on the moral and spiritual conception of monument has continued since the First Intermediate Period teaching of Kheti and the autobiographies of the Middle Kingdom (Vernus, 1976:145).

Thus, doing and speaking good or speaking a good deed is specific in terms of offerings, prayers and remembrance, but by extension and parallel refers to the reciprocity of good deeds and good speech in all areas. However, even the offerings, prayers and remembrance aspect had become an explicit act of conduct of Maat (*sḫrw m3ʿt*) in the 18th Dynasty. As noted above, Paheri says to visitors to his grave that bending the arm in offering, prayer and remembrance is doing Maat.

> *k̇ʿḥ.tyfy nb m ḏrt ḫpr.f m sḫrw m3ʿt*
> Anyone who bends his arm will be acting
> according to Maat. (Urk. IV:121.12)

The phrase "*ḫpr m*" carries the sense of "amount to" or "count as" or "according to" (Faulkner, 1981:189). Thus, the phrase "*ḫpr.f m sḫrw m3ʿt*" can be read literally as "it amounts to the conduct of Maat."

The final text of the three cited above is the autobiography of Lady Ta-Habet (Bouriant, 1887:88-89; Budge, 1896:

123-134). Her autobiography begins as the others, identifying herself by introducing her parents, Herumes, her father, and Kheret-Min, her mother, both of whose names are followed by the customary title of the deceased, *m3' ḫrw* (true of voice or justified, i.e., before history and heaven). After a list of blessings by the divinities, there are prayers of offerings and praise. Then, Lady Ta-Habet turns to the living to offer instructions about the *w3t n 'nḫ*. This in reality is a moral self-presentation which is paradigmatic for those who walk in the way of God, life and Maat. She says:

> *mi sšm.tn ḥr w3t n 'nḫ w3t nfrt šms nṯr*
> *ḥsy pw sšm ib.f r.s*
> *ḏd.i n.ṯn m ḫpri m.i*
> *rdi.i s3.ṯn m sḫrw n nṯr*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *ink m3'-ib nn rdit(.i) hr gs.i*
> *ink rdit(.i) t n ḥḳr mw n ib ḥbs n ḥ3wy*
> *pg3 ḏrt n bw nb*
> *ink im3ḫyt n it.s ḥsyt n mwt.s*
> *im3-ib n snw ḫnm-ib ḥn' niwtyw.s*
> *ink s'nḫ ḥḳr m ḫt(.i) m tr nb ḥ'py nḏst*
> *rdit(.i) ḫrt b3w 'nḫw iḳr.sn m mḏt ss mnḫt*
> *m-ḫt pr b3w r pt*
> *ink rdi(.i) hrw n nṯr nb n.f*
> *irrt(.i) ḫrt hnmmt m ḫt.s*
> *Wsir T3-hbt, . . .*
> *ink šmt ḥr w3t nṯr ḏr nḫn r-mn-m min*
> *ink im3ḫyt smt ḥr w3t im3ḫywt*
> *ink 'ḳ(.i) (m) bi3(t) nfr(t)*
> *. . .ḏd p3ys . . .nfr n bw nb*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *hr nty st nfrt n dw3t.s im3ḫyt n sw3s.s*

> Come let me lead you on the way of life,
> the good way of one who follows God.
> Blessed is one whose heart leads him to it.
> I will tell you what happened to me.
> I will cause you to know the will of God.
> \- - - - - - - -
> I was just and did not show partiality.

I gave bread to the hungry, water to the
    thirsty and clothes to the naked.
I was open-handed to everyone.

I was honored by my father, praised by
    my mother.
Kind to my brothers and sisters
And one who was united in heart with
    the people of her city.
I nourished the hungry with my property
    every time the Nile was low.

I made excellent the provisions of the
    living souls with oil, alabaster and
    clothing,
After they had gone to heaven.
I celebrated the day of every divinity for him.
Supplying the provisions of the sun-folk
    with her property.
The Osiris Ta-Habet, justified.
I am one who walked on the way of God since
    I was a child to this day.
I am an honored one who walked on the way
    of the honored ones.
I entered (with) good character.
. . .I spoke good to everyone.
- - - - - - - -
Because I was a good woman worthy of praise,
An honored one worthy of honor . . ..

The text at this point is plagued by lacunae and errors in copying. However, the general sense conveyed by the remaining passages is that "the precepts of the God entered her heart and she entered upon his way." She closes by saying that God caused her to have pious children, "a son as a priest of Shu and a daughter as a priestess of Nephthys."

Lady Ta-Habet's text integrates piety and ethics as do most Kemetic ethical texts. She, as others above, is concerned about her life being a moral paradigm of both achievement and possibility, summed up in the category "*w3t 'nh*," the way of life. This way, as Ptahhotep first defined

it, is the way of Maat, the way of God, and the path to eternity. This path to eternity is paved by moral self-discipline and development, and by service and memory of one's worthiness on the personal and social level. Ta-Habet begins her declarations of virtue with the virtue of justice or more precisely justness (*m3'-ib*) and continues with the Old Kingdom central moral imperative of "giving bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty and clothes to the naked."

She also reveals a special generosity during the periodic famines which occurred in Kemet. This, in turn, gives us an idea of the socio-economic conditions of her times and at least one way the society handled famine which was, as Vandier's (1936) study shows, a regular and devastating occurrence. Obviously, a wealthy as well as religious woman, she defines her ethical duty not only in terms of care for the vulnerable, but also for the living souls who have gone to heaven, the priests of the temple and the people of her town in general. In a word, she represents, by her own words, a civic virtue that united her in heart with all the people of her city (*ẖnm-ib ḥn' niwtyw.s*).

Finally, indicative of the Declarations of Virtue in the Late Period is the one within the *s3hw* (glorifications) text of Horemheb, son of Petemin (Smith, 1987:36.II,6-12, 18). In his moral self-presentation, Horemheb is both traditional and innovative, saying:

> I am one who was gracious to all who
> reached him

I am one without deficiency who loved
excellence and took time for
every son
I am one without destructiveness who
loved foundation, gracious before
the one who encountered him
I am one worthy of recognition, belonging
to this house. It is having been
sought that I have come
I am one worthy of greatness . . . .
I am one who was amicable in his stopping
places who extended friendship to
every person.
I was the possessor of deliberation whose
mind was reflective, for whom his
heart was an overseer.
- - - - - - - -
I am come, being excellent without reproach.
My father and my mother have praised me.

Following Smith's transliteration and translation, I have substituted only two words, both in line 7 of his translation. The first is the use of "deficiency" instead of "failure" in the phrase "*iwt why*," i.e. without deficiency. The range of meanings for "*why*" justify this usage and in the context of the declaring virtues reflect more definitively the traditional Maatian concern for moral blamelessness, i.e., being weighed, counted, and considered without blemish or deficiency in the balance or judgment. The use of "failure" on the other hand tends to suggest without clarification a general problem of performance rather than a moral one. Likewise, the translation of "*mnḫ*," as "efficacy" in the phrase "*mr mnḫ*," i.e., who loved efficacy, suggests a general concern for effectiveness rather than a moral concern. Thus, use of "excellence" to translate "*mnḫ*" is to follow the traditional Maatian concern for moral and

social excellence. For in the context of declaring virtues, "*mnḫ*" is more definitively reflective of a concern for moral and social virtues (excellences) and blamelessness than "efficacy." This link of moral excellence and blamelessness is evidenced in line 18 in which Smith does use "excellent" to translate Horemheb's assertion "I am come being excellent without reproach."

Having said this, it is obvious that the virtues that Horemheb claims are historically grounded ones, as Smith (1987:24) states. They include: a friendly reception to travellers, and thus to strangers, blamelessness and a lover of excellence (moral and social as traditionally implied), patience and concern, a lover of tradition (*grg*, foundation), worthiness, friendliness, thoughtfulness in both an intellectual and moral sense, i.e, in the sense of the mind/emotion meaning of "*ib*" and "*ḥ3ty*." Thus, even at the end of Kemetic civilization the stress on mind/heart as a guide and "overseer" and the importance of "deliberation" and the "reflective mind" is reaffirmed in the Maatian quest for the good person and the just and good society.

3.2.6.2 The Sebait

The two major Sebait in the Late Period are the Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi (Glanville, 1955; Pirenne, 1964; AEL III: 159-184; Lichtheim, 1983:13-92; Thissen, 1984) and the Sebait of Phebhor or pInsinger (Boeser, 1925; Lexa, 1926; Volten, 1940; AEL III:184-217; Lichtheim, 1983:107-169).

Ankhsheshonqi appears to have been written in the late period of Greek domination and Phebhor appears to have been written during this period also, although "the handwriting dates from the first century (B.C.E.)" (AEL III:184). These major works reflect encounter, engagement and discourse within an international context and represent a fundamental time of turning for Kemet.

Lichtheim (1992:100-101) has observed that "Maat thinking in the two major Late Period Demotic Instructions, Ankhsheshonqi and pInsinger (Phebhor), is entirely in keeping with the overall development" of Maatian ethical thought. In her work on Late Egyptian Wisdom Texts, she (1983:39) had incorrectly asserted that "[t]he old term for cosmic order, Maat, is not used in Demotic Instructions." However, in her latest work, she (1992: 101) corrects this, noting that this assumption was made before she "had indexed the occurrence of Maat." This error was significant because Assmann (1990:254ff) used it to support his contention of the disappearance of Maat. But, as she notes, even though Maat continues to be used throughout Kemetic history, it is the enduring moral values and vision of Maat which is key, not necessarily the term itself.

Ankhsheshonqi's principle themes include: 1) reaffirmation of the law of reciprocity discussed earlier in the Sebait which evolved from the working of Maat; 2) the multidimensional aspect of cause and effect, and appropriate

responses; 3) the centrality of character, now called *3my.t*; and then four themes which Lichtheim (1983:43) lists as "topics with international connections; 4) gracious living; 5) wise men and fools; 6) good and bad women; and 7) wealth and poverty." These themes clearly fit within the Sebaitic tradition. What is different is that they are addressed in the context of international encounter and exchange.

Especially notable is Ankhsheshonqi's stress on the centrality of character (*3my.t*). It is expressed in the following passages:

> A man's character is his family.
> A man's character is his (destiny).
> A man's character is on his face.
> A man's character is one of his limbs.
> (Ankhsheshonqi 11, 11-14)

This emphasis on the centrality of character reflects a virtue ethics that we find already in the Old Kingdom and brings to mind the earlier teachings that "The monument of a man is his good character," Mentuhotep (Goedicke, 1962: 26); "A Man's heaven is his character," Merikara (31). "The character of a son of man is valuable to him" and "Good character is a memorial," (Ptahhotep, 493 and 494). Previously, the word for character were *bit*, *bi3t*, *iwn* and *ḳd*; in the Late Period the word is *3my.t*. The key polar pairs to indicate character and lack of it are *rmt rḫ* (the wise man and *rmt swg* (the fool) and *rmt ntr* (the man of God) and *s3b3* (the impious man).

As Lichtheim has shown, the moral vocabularies of both Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor are expansive having steadily developed in the course of international exchange since the New Kingdom. The category Maat (now *mt.t m3't*) appears twice in Ankhsheshonqi signifying justice and truth. The first occurrence is in the context of describing the state of a nation which has earned God's anger. The text reads:

> If Ra is angry with a land its ruler,
> neglects the law
> If Ra is angry with the land he makes,
> law cease in it
> If Ra is angry with a land, he makes
> sanctity cease in it
> If Ra is angry with the land, he makes
> Maat (justice) cease in it.
> (Lichtheim, 1983:70.5,5)

Lichtheim (1992:101) reads this in the context of the lines which precede and follow it as "the description of a nation's perdition when its Maat has been destroyed." The text seems to presuppose that it is the failure to do Maat that engenders God's anger and that he allows it to continue as self-induced punishment in terms of the law of reciprocity. The second reference to Maat is in the context of urging truthfulness. The text reads: "Speak Maat (truth) let it (cling) to your speech" (Lichtheim, 1983:78.13,15).

The Sebait of Phebhor, unlike Ankhsheshonqi, is an organized composition with recognizable themes for different chapters. Some of the key themes of Phebhor are the centrality of character, paradoxes of fate and fortune, the wise man and the fool, treatment of strangers, godliness and

impiousness, good and bad women, and balance as a cardinal virtue. In terms of balance (*mḫy.t*) or being balanced (*mḫy*) and the related concept *ḏnf* (be measured or right measure), Phebhor says:

> The beam that is longer than its right measure,
> its excess is cut off.
> The wind that is greater than its right
> measure wrecks the ships.
> All things that are good through right measure,
> their owner does not offend.
> The great god Djehuti has set a balance in order
> to make right measure.
> He placed the heart hidden in the (body) for
> the right measure of its owner.
> If a wise man is not balanced, his wisdom
> does not avail,
> (And) a fool who does not know balance is not far
> from trouble. (Lichtheim, 1983:200.4,14-20)

Balance, then, plays a central role in Phebhor's conception of the moral personality. It is certainly related to self-control (*twt*), an early virtue in Maatian ethics, signified by the paradigmatic person, the geru maa.

Maat and its adjectival forms occur many times in the Sebait of Phebhor. These include the following:

> (1) Law and justice (Maat) cease in a town where there is no stick. (14,16)
> (2) A small truth (Maat), its owner (injures by it). (24,16)
> (3) It is he (God) who gives the just law (Maat) without there being judgment. (31,15)
> (4) He (God) created wealth for truth (Maat), poverty for falsehood (*mt.t 'd*). (32,15)

Maat, then, in direct reference appears similar in use to Maat in other periods, but Maatian ethics are clearly affected by an expanded discourse which brings new ways of conceiving and expressing the ethical project.

Both Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor revised traditional Sebaitic themes in ways which reflect encounter with an international community and especially Hellenistic culture. Ankhsheshonqi's harsh criticism of women except for mothers and the good wife goes far beyond former Sebait and suggests Greek concepts of women (Lichtheim, 1983:50). Phebhor's emphasis on cultivating the sage (*rmṯ rḫ*) evolves in a context of both tradition and encounter. First, the wise person (*rḫ, s33*) had since the Old Kingdom been central to Kemetic moral discourse (Williams, 1981, 1990a, 1990b). The Sebait which are the central moral treatises of Kemetic ethics are, indeed, most often the products of sages and are rightly called wisdom literature.

The *rḫ* or sage of Kemet, like sages in other parts of Africa and the world, express a commanding confidence in the power and efficacy of knowledge, learning and teaching (Gammie and Perdue, 1990; Griaule, 1978). Their confidence was grounded in certain assumptions both about the orderliness of the world and the possibility of human nature. They associate righteousness with wisdom and foolishness and ignorance with evil. They also master and build on the accumulated insights of past generations, upholding the value of tradition and the insightfulness of the ancestors. Finally, they teach values of self-mastery, truthfulness, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order.

Thus, Phebhor builds on an existing tradition of wisdom literature and practice.

However, he also draws from a context of encounter and the mutually-influencing process this initiates and sustains. Lichtheim (1983:122-125) has rightly noted this exchange and has, at the same time, suggested the possibility of influence from Greek sources. For example, the Stoics offer a moral philosophy concerning sage and fool, an ordered universe, freedom from passions, and love of truth and justice which parallels and finds harmony with the Demotic Sebait. But the wise and fool polarities had long been a theme in Sebaitic literature as attested in the Sebait of Ptahhotep. Ptahhotep poses the wise man (*rḫ*) as a doer of Maat, a listener and one who "feeds his ba with what endures" (520ff). And he defines the fool (*wḫ3*) as the paradigmatic non-listener, one deaf to Maat and one who "sees knowledge as ignorance and benefit as injury" (575ff). Likewise, the other themes are attested in the ethical literature of Kemet. Thus, the question arises of in what way and to what extent Kemetic and Hellenistic culture mutually influence each other? For given the anteriority of the Kemetic philosophical themes and concepts, it is difficult to make a case for Hellenistic introduction of these. What seems more plausible is to argue that the encounter expanded and enriched discourse in both cultures and then point out the areas of expansion and enrichment

while being cautious of inflated claims. One can also pursue differences in the midst of similarities.

For example, in Hellenistic philosophy, there is both a tradition of the wise man as knower of theoretical knowledge (ho sophos) and of the wise man as knower of practical knowledge (ho phronimos) (Kerferd, 1990:326). Although the Stoics evolved toward emphasis on practical wisdom, much like the Seba of ancient Egypt "Plato in his Republic developed the concept of the wise man as a philosopher in a highly technical sense, that is as someone possessing a knowledge of truth" (Kerferd, 1990:320). This truth is more of an abstraction than a concrete knowledge of reality and its possibilities for human relations and human action, and thus differs from the Kemetic approach to the study and understanding of truth.

The *rḫ* or *s33* (wise man) or Seba Maat (moral teacher) in the tradition of Ptahhotep et al is not concerned with truth or justice as abstracts, but as kinds of practice, as essential elements in the just and good society and in the good life, and as contributions to the ground of human flourishing. Therefore in the Sebaitic tradition, Maat is not the Truth or Justice as the abstract Ideal, but is something one speaks and does, loves, wills and practices. When Intef, son of Sent (Sethe, 1928:81.3-4) says "I am a listener who listens to Maat and ponders (*sw3w3*) it in his heart," he is indeed contemplating Maat. But he is contem-

plating it not so much as an abstract Truth or ideal, but as an engaging moral practice. This is attested to by the long list of Maatian virtues he cites as definitive of his character. Although his list involves Maatian expressions of thought, emotion, speech and conduct, it is clear conduct or Maat-doing is his central concern. Thus, he defines himself generous to the have-nots, a teacher to the unlearned, friend to the humble--in a word, of doer of good, i.e., Maat. Likewise, when Intef, the herald, says he is "one who searched after Maat--*pẖr m-s3 m3't*" and the priest Somtutefnakht says "my heart searched for Maat in your temple every day--*ib.i ḥr ḥḥ bw m3' m pr.k r' nb*," they are not referring to an abstract quest. On the contrary, they seek a meaning of Maat which has practical implications for the good life, the just and good society. The quest for Maat, then, is clearly both an intellectual and practical project directed toward building and sustaining moral community. Thus, ideals of truth and justice always have practical meanings and application. Moreover, even Maat as an overarching and grounding principle of existence is essentially valued for its effectiveness, eternalness, its role as the ground of creation, moral existence and human flourishing, as is attested in the texts which define it, such as Ptahhotep and Khun-Anup.

In a word, then, in ancient Egyptian philosophical and ethical discourse, as in other African cultures, the

emphasis is always on the practical, the concern for the practical and efficacious use of knowledge in the service of human good and human life (Gyekye, 1987; Drewal, Pemberton and Abiodun, 1989; Zahan, 1979:chapter 4). Thus, in spite of the increased contemplative nature of the Sebait of Phebhor, his basic thrust is still to offer an instruction for living, not simply for thinking, as would evolve in Hellenistic culture.

On the other hand, Gammie (1990:152) has pointed out the assumption of Kemetic honorific titles for wise men at the Hellenistic court and Williams (1990a) notes functions of sages at the Kemetic royal court which one finds later parallels in Hellenistic and Hebrew culture, i.e., counselors, friends, courtiers, scribes, ministers, diplomats, physicians, authors and court officials of various kinds. This reflects Kemet's influence in institutional conception and practice on the Hellenistic and Hebrew culture. Hellenistic influence on Kemetic thought as expressed in Demotic wisdom literature is perhaps clearer in the appearance of the sage as the ideal person, the concepts of fortune and the ages of man (Lichtheim, 1979:301ff).

Phebhor's stress on the sage as the ideal man is clearly a different focus than the paradigm of the geru maa, the self-mastered person. Certainly, the geru maa has wisdom as one of his defining features, but it is not his most definitive feature. The defining feature of the

Maatian person is his or her Maat-ness, an inclusive characteristic which has a moral, spiritual, intellectual and social dimension. In a word, then, wisdom is a facilitating virtue, it is not the definitive one for the Maatian person. However, in Stoic philosophy, which is at one point a defining moment of Greek philosophical tradition, "the concept of the wise man comes to be identified with the ideal for humans, the perfect man who must be the ultimate objective for human aspirations" (Kerferd, 1990: 320). To the extent that Phebhor reflects this conception of the paradigmatic person, his thought appears to evidence Hellenistic influence.

It is important here to note again that in the exchange Kemet does not simply borrow but also contributes to world culture in this process of encounter and exchange, i.e., its instructions, the concept of soul, the concept of judgment, and the concept of immortality are all important contributions to the discourse of the period in addition to influences noted above (Harris, 1971). Moreover, even in its borrowing, Kemetic discourse shapes the things borrowed in its own image and interest, and at the same time helps shape the philosophical discourse from which it borrows. Clearly, then, the Sebait of the Late Period mark a world in exchange and flux, and the religious, moral and social thought and practice of Kemet is obviously affected by this and affects others. However, the extent of this mutually affecting pro-

cess is an open question and remains a source of ongoing scholarly debate.

IV

THE DECLARATIONS OF INNOCENCE: TEXT AND MORAL THEOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The history of the concept and practice of Maat is clearly enriched and refined by the development of the Declarations of Innocence (DOI) as a set of ideal norms which gave concrete expression to the ideal theme of Maat (Maystre, 1937; Drioton, 1922; Spiegel, 1935:60ff; Morderau, 1938; Morenz, 1984:131ff; Assmann, 1989c:76ff, 1990:136ff). This chapter will provide a transliteration and translation of the DOI and a discussion of the genealogy of the textual locus of the DOI--The Book of Coming Forth By Day. It will also give a description of the theological setting of the DOI and offer a critical articulation of Maatian moral theology in terms of its fundamental concepts of judgment, justification and immortality, including an intellectual history of the idea of judgment.

As posited above, Maat is an ideal theme or moral vision which provides a general point of orientation directed toward a desirable telos or end state of affairs in one's life. But the Declarations as a set of ideal norms provides a standard of excellence and measurement which serve as what Cua (1978:134) calls "blueprints...constructed for concrete action." Evolving in the New Kingdom, the Declarations, as Tobin (1989:190) notes, "may be taken as normative of the morality which was held as ideal by the average individual in ancient Egypt." Morenz (1984:131) also notes the ideal character of the Declarations stating that they "convey what Egyptians understood as an ideal way of life to which all should aspire." Likewise, Drioton (1949:19) observes that the DOI reflects a moral tradition rooted in the concept of justice and judgment which involves not only concern for other humans, but also for animals.

4.2 The Textual Locus

The textual locus of the Declarations of Innocence is the Book of Coming Forth By Day, certainly, the most well-known ancient Egyptian sacred text (Davis, 1894; Budge, 1895; Budge, 1898: 3 volumes; Naville, 1971; Allen, 1974; Hornung, 1979; Rossiter, 1979; Faulkner, 1985; Dondelinger, 1987; Munroe, 1987). It is usually called the Book of the Dead, a name reportedly given to it by the German Egyptologist, Richard Lepsius who obtained copies of it from Egyptian peasants who stated they had found it buried with

the dead (Rossiter, 1979:9). The correct name of the book, however, is given in its first chapter as "*Rw nw Prt m Hrw*" or "*Ru nu Pert em Heru*"--The Book of Coming Forth By Day. Actually, the word "*rw*" means chapters, sayings or utterances, but it has come to mean through consensus and usage "book" in this case. In other cases, book is either (*md̲3t*) medjat, (*t̲3w*) tchau or (*šfdw*) shefedu (papyrus-roll), and in a more general sense of something written--(*sš*) sesh. Moreover, "*prt*" may mean "going forth" or "coming forth." In fact, Thomas G. Allen (1974) translates it as "going forth," while others like Miriam Lichtheim (AEL I:119), R.O. Faulkner (1985) and E.A. Wallis Budge (1898) translate it as "coming forth." In any case, it refers to a process which involves breaking the bonds of death and grave and coming forth to bask in sunlight in a spiritual sense. It is both a vision and aspiration to overcome death, to go and come freely in heaven and earth and assume any form in any place one's spirit wishes to be (BCF, Chap. 1; Karenga, 1984:106).

The genealogy of the Book of Coming Forth By Day begins with the Pyramid Texts, religious texts with a collection of spiritual, ethical, ritual and magical sayings essentially concerned with resurrection, judgment and immortality (Faulkner, 1969; Sethe, 1908-1922, 4 volumes.; Mercer, 1952: 4 volumes). It was a custom to place sacred texts in the tombs of the departed as early as the Old Kingdom. In fact,

in the Fifth Dynasty, (ca. 2400-2300 B.C.E.), King Unas, the last king of the dynasty, adorned the interior walls of his pyramid at Saqqara with sacred texts. This began a practice which subsequent kings of the Sixth Dynasty (ca. 2300-2150 B.C.E.) followed. It is in these texts that the ideas of rising and transformation, immortality, judgment and justification, which we find later in the Book of Coming Forth By Day, first appear.

With the collapse of central authority during the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2135-2040 B.C.E.), we find an expansion of the use of these sacred texts. Whereas these texts were once essentially used by royalty, persons of rank and wealth began to use them and place them in and on their coffins in the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties (ca.2040-1785 B.C.E.). These are generally known as the *Coffin Texts* and are called by the ancient Egyptians *The Book of Vindication* according to a title given to at least one section of them (Faulkner, 1973:1). These texts form direct antecedents of many passages and rich imagery in the Book of Coming Forth By Day. The focus on vindication (*m3ʿ ḫrw*) *maa kheru* and transformation (*irt ḫprw m*) *iret kheperu em* dominate, and the designation of the departed as Osiris, as in the Pyramid Texts, insures his/her promise of rising, transformation and immortality.

Parkinson and Quirke (1992:47) argue that "the first indisputable evidence for the (Coming Forth) corpus would be

the Herunefer and Queen Montuhotpe texts" which occur in the late 17th and early 18th Dynasty. These texts evidence the early evolution of Coming Forth and are written in cursive hieroglyphs on linen shrouds of members of the royal family and others. By the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, the practice of placing the texts of the Coming Forth becomes more widespread and is thus more widely attested.

The Book of Coming Forth By Day represents the popularization and increased access to and use of the sacred texts of prayers and aspirations of immortality. The surviving manuscripts are divided into two basic types and periods--the Theban Recension (1575-800 B.C.E.) and the Saite Recension (ca. 664-522 B.C.E.). The first period represents a process of beginning systemization and focuses on individual passages, whereas in the Late Period the book as a whole becomes important. These versions are written on papyri in vertical lines of cursive hieroglyphs and are accompanied by vignettes, beautiful scenes, drawn or painted in various colors to illustrate the text. The vignettes become works of art themselves as shown by the artwork of the Papyrus of Ani (Budge, 1913). In fact, the papyrus of Ani is, according to Budge (1960:106), "the largest, most perfect and best illuminated of all the papyri containing copies of the Theban Recension . . . ." Finally, the inscriptions of these papyri were further enhanced by the use of red ink to

highlight chapter headings or significant points in addition to the use of regular black ink.

The Saite Recension (or Revision) begins in the context of the restoration of order and central authority of kings from the Delta city of Sais in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (664-525 B.C.E.). During this revision or recension, the canonical order and content are essentially established. Also, there is a return to a more simple vignette and thus more attention to the text than the artwork which at points seemed more important during the Nineteenth Dynasty. In any case, the Book of Coming Forth By Day was clearly the most important sacred text in Kemetic religious literature from its first formulation through the Saite period to the end of the period of Greek domination (332-30 B.C.E.).

But of all the engaging sections and chapters in the Book of Coming Forth By Day none is more significant and reflective of ancient Egyptian spirituality than Chapter 125. Here one finds theology and ethics, a philosophical anthropology and eschatology, hymns of praise and declarations of innocence from offenses to God, humans and nature. It is here that one gets not only a concept of ancient Egyptian religion in general, but also and especially important for this work, a concept of the ancient Egyptian ethical ideal as expressed in the Declarations of Innocence (Maystre, 1937; Moderau, 1938; Drioton, 1949; Brandon, 1967; Yoyotte, 1961).

4.3 The Theological Setting

The setting for the Declarations of Innocence is the post-mortem judgment scene found in Chapter 125 of the Book of Coming Forth By Day whose central themes are judgment, justification and immortality. The Declarations are sometimes called the "Negative Confessions." But as Breasted (1934:258) states, "this designation is inept and inappropriate, for they are not a confession which is an admission of wrongdoing but a declaration of innocence which is opposite in both meaning and intent."

The judgment scene begins with entrance into the Hall of Judgment called the Great Hall of Maati (The Two Truths) as shown in the Papyrus of Ani (Budge, 1913). Here king, queen, noble and the ordinary person had to justify themselves and be vindicated (maa kheru, true of voice and triumphant) in their quest for immortality by a valid claim of a righteous life on earth. As the Declarations of Innocence and Virtues reveal, one had to be free of offenses against God, humans and nature (animate and inanimate) and to have done positive acts of good, especially for the vulnerable. Upon arriving at the Great Hall of Maati, one enters humbly, bowing as scenes from the Papyrus of Ani, the scribe, and Tutu, his wife, show (Budge, 1913: pl.3). The deceased then states his righteousness, having brought Maat (*in.n.i n.k m3't*) and driven away isfet (*dr.n.i n.i isft*).

In one scene Ani appeals to his heart not to betray him, i.e., not to have misled him in his assumption of righteousness,

> Oh heart of my mother, my heart whereby I came into being. Stand not up against me as a witness nor oppose me in the Council of Judgment. Weigh not heavy against me before the Keeper of the Balance. You are my divine essence which dwells in my body, the divine power which makes strong my limbs. When you come forth in the place of happiness where we go, may you not cause my name to send forth an offensive odor before those who assign people to (eternal life). (BCF, chap. 30; Budge, 1898:96)

As other papyri demonstrate and as noted above, the risen one then declares himself innocent of all offenses and asserts his having done good in the sight of God and humans, before history and heaven.

This two-pronged justification is important for it shows the Maatian concern with not simply not doing evil, but also in doing good. Or put another way, as Khun-Anup says of the righteous person, he is not only "one who destroys isfet (evil)," but also "one who brings righteousness (Maat) into being" (Khun-Anup, B1, 67). Here, the deceased makes thirty-six Declarations of Innocence of offense against God, humans and nature and then forty-two more before forty-two divine powers (*nṯrw*) who sit in judgment of him. Then the deceased declares her virtues saying that she did Maat in Egypt, and lives on Maat. Moreover, the deceased declares that he has done what was worthy of praise by others and that which pleased God. Especially

important, the deceased declares moral concern and care for the most vulnerable of society, saying "I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one."

The third aspect of the judgment as portrayed in the Papyrus of Ani is the weighing of the heart (Piankoff, 1930:78ff; Greishammer, 1970:48-51). The central focus of this scene is "that balance of Ra in which he weighs Maat" *mḫ3t tw nt Rʿ f33t.f m3ʿt im.s*" (CT V:321). The Balance or Scales of Maat (Truth, Justice) is handled by Anpu (Anubis), the divine power who presides over the deceased. He is called *iry mḫ3t*, Master of the Balance. Standing behind him is Djehuti (Thoth), the Scribe of Heaven and Lord of Just Measure, with pen and palette in hand, who records and announces the results. In Chapter 182 of Coming Forth, Djehuti describes himself thus:

> I am Djehuti, a worthy scribe whose hands are clean, a possessor of purity, who drives away evil, who writes what is truth and justice (Maat), one whose hatred is evil, whose pen defends the Lord of the Universe, a master of laws, who interprets writings, whose words have given foundation to the Two Lands. I am Djehuti, Lord of Maat, witness of truth to the divinities, one who judges a matter so that it (Maat) will exist, who vindicates one whose voice is hushed, who dispels darkness and drives away the storm.

He is thus established as central to judgment and justification.

Behind Djehuti, in this scene of the proceedings, is a hybrid monster called *ʿm mwt* (Ammut), the devourer of the

dead, who devours the deceased if s/he is found unworthy of eternal life. Also in the Hall of Maati are the divine powers of destiny (Shai), birth (Renenet) and nursing/rearing (Meskhenet), authoritative utterance (Hu) and exceptional insight (Sia). And at the end of the Hall is seated on his throne Osiris, whose resurrection from the dead, symbolized and promised eternal life through righteousness for human beings (Budge, 1961; Griffiths, 1980; Leca, 1982). Behind him stands Isis, his wife, and Nephthys, his sister. And finally along one side of the Hall are seated Ra and other members of the Heliopolitan Ennead (The Great Nine Divine Powers).

After one declares both innocence and virtue, one's heart is placed in the Great Scale of Judgment, the Balance of Ra, where it is weighed against the feather of Maat. If one is vindicated, as Ani is, then Djehuti records and announces the verdict saying to the Ennead,

> Hear this word in truth. I have judged the heart of Osiris (Ani). His soul stands as a witness for him. His conduct is righteous according to the Great Scales. And no fault (*bt3*) has been found in him. (Chapter 30B)

The Ennead in turn, affirm his ruling saying,

> What you have said is true. The Osiris and scribe Ani, justified (*m3' ḫrw*), is upright (*mty*). He has committed no offense (*bt3*) and there is no accusation against him before us. Nor has he done anything against us. Ammut (*'m mwt*) shall not be permitted to have power over him.

If, however, the one judged is not judged "maa kheru"--vindicated, true of voice and triumphant--he is turned over to Ammut who dispatches him into non-existence.

Having been judged maa-kheru, one becomes an Osiris and, like Osiris himself, gains eternal life. Eternal life is thus closely connected to Osiris, who was killed and resurrected and through his resurrection in and through righteousness represents, as noted above, the possibility and promise of eternal life through righteousness (Maat). It is in this context that the risen person declares: "*'nḫ.i m m3't wnn(.i) im.s*--I live by Maat, I exist thereby" (BCF, 29A). Therefore, having been ruled righteous by Djehuti and the forty-two divine powers who hear the Declarations of Innocence, Ani is lead by Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, before Osiris. Here Horus reports that Ani has been found righteous in the Scales, that he has no offense in the sight of any divine power, male or female, that the Ennead has born witness to his righteousness and requests he be accepted among the powers of heaven.

> The text says:
> Horus, son of Isis says: I have come before you O' Wennofer having brought to you the Osiris Ani. His heart is righteous, having come forth from the balance. He has not committed an offense against any divinity male or female. Djehuti has recorded it in writing, what has been told to the Ennead concerning him. And Maat the great has witnessed it. (Chapter 30B)

After this, Ani speaks saying:

> Behold I am in your presence O Lord of Heaven. There is no evil in my body. I have not spoken

lies knowingly and I have not practiced deception. Grant that I may be like those favored ones who are in your following, ...

Then he kneels before Osiris, presents his offerings and is received into the Otherworld (Amenta).

4.4 The Transliteration and Translation

The translation of the Declarations and accompanying passages in Chapter 125 below follows the Papyrus of Nu (British Museum, No. 10477, Sheet 22) for the bulk of the text, and the Papyrus of Nebseni (British Museum No. 9,900, Sheet 30) for Declaration B (see Budge, 1898:249ff). Of course, the translation of this text has made valuable use of existing translations and studies of the Book of Coming Forth By Day. In translating, I have tried to be as faithful to the letter and spirit of the text as possible. In this regard, where sentences could be enhanced by additional words of clarification, I have added them in brackets. Moreover, I have omitted the more symbolic and mystical parts of the Chapter which follow the Declarations of Innocence and the address to the divine powers in the Hall of Maat. For my essential purpose is to extract and explicate the ethical core of the Chapter, not the more esoteric and mystical substance in which it is embedded. Translation notes are at the end of this chapter.

4.4.1 The Introduction

4.4.1.1 The Transliteration

Ḏdtw ḫft spr r wsḫt nt M3ʿty
pḫ3 N. m ḫww nb ir.n.f m33 ḫrw

ntrw nbw:
Ind hr.k ntr '3 nb M3'ty
ii.n.i hr.k nb.i int(w).kwi
m3.n.i nfrw.k
Iw.i rh.kwi tw rh.kwi rn.k
rh.kwi rn n p3 ntr 42 n
wnnyw hn'.k m wsht.tn nt M3'ty
'nhyw m s3wt dwt
s'myw m snfw.sn hrw pwy
n hsb kdw m-b3h wnn nfr
mk s3ty irty nb M3'ty rn.k
mk.wi ii.kwi hr.k in.n.i n.k M3't
dr.n.i n.k isft

4.4.1.2 The Translation

What one should (be able to say) say (1) upon arriving at this Great Hall of Maati, (The Two Truths) (2) so that he may be cleansed from all wrong-doing which he has done and see the faces of all the divine ones (without fear) (3).

Homage to you Great God, Lord of Maati. I have come before you, my Lord. I was brought that I might behold your beauty. I know you. I know your name. I know the name of the forty-two divinities who are with you in the Great Hall of Maati, those who live to stand guard against evil doers and who consume their blood (4) on that day of taking account of characters before Wennofer (5). Surely, The Two Daughters, Two Eyes, Lord of Two Truths is your name. Indeed, I have come before you. And I have brought you Maat. I have done away with evil for you.

4.4.2 Declarations of Innocence (A)

4.4.2.1 The Transliteration

1. *n ir.i isft r rmt*
2. *nn sm3r.i wndwt*
3. *n ir.i iwyt m st M3't*
4. *n rh.i iwtt*

5. n ir.i bw ḏw
6. n ir.i tp r‘ nb b3kw m hrw irt n.i
7. n spr rn.i r ‘3t nt ḫrp ḥmw
8. nn nmḥ.i nmḥy m ḫt.f
9. nn ir.i bwt nṯrw
10. n sḏwy.i ḥm n ḥry-tp.f
11. n smr.i
12. n sḥḳr.i
13. n srm.i
14. n sm3.i
15. n wḏ.i sm3
16. n ir.i mnt ḥr rmṯ
17. n ḫb.i sbw m rw-prw
18. n ḥḏ.i p3wt nṯrw
19. n nḫm fnḫw 3ḫw
20. n nk.i
21. n d3d3.i
22. n ḫb.i m dbḫw
23. n ḫb.i sṯ3t
24. n si3t 3ḫt
25. n w3ḥ ḥr mwt nt iwsw
26. n nmḥ.i m tḫ n mḫ3t
27. n nḥm irrṯt m rn n nḫnw
28. n kf.i ‘wt ḥr smw.sn
29. n sḥt.i 3pdw n g3šw nṯrw
30. n ḫ3m.i rmw n ḫ3wt.sn
31. n ḫsf.i mw tr.f
32. n ḏni.i dnit ḥr mw 3sw
33. n ‘ḫm.i ḫt m 3t.s
34. n tḫ.i sww ḥr stpt
35. n šn‘.i mnmnt ḥr ḫt nṯr
36. n ḫsf nṯr m prw.f

iw.i w‘b.kwi sp-4
‘bw.i ‘bw.i bnw pwy ‘3 nty Nni-nsw
ḥr ntt ink is fnḏ pwy n nb ṯ3w
s‘nḫ rḫyt nbt r‘ pwy n mḥ wḏ3t m Inw
    m 3bd-2 prt ‘rky
m-b3ḥ nb t3 pn
nn ḫpr bw ḏw r.i m t3 pn m wsḫt.ṯn
    nt M3‘ty
ḥr ntt tw.i rḫ.kwi rn n nn nṯrw wnyw
    im.s [šmsw nṯr ‘3]

4.4.2.2 The Translation

1. I have not done wrong to people.

2. I have not impoverished my family or friends.(6)

3. I have not done wrong instead of right.(7)

4. I have not known that which does not exist.(8)

5. I have not done evil.

6. I have not begun the day by demanding more work than is due me.

7. My name has not reached the offices of those who oversee servants. (9)

8. I have not deprived the orphan of his property.

9. I have not done what the divine ones hate.

10. I have not slandered a servant to his superior.

11. I have not caused anyone pain.

12. I have not caused anyone to hunger.

13. I have not caused anyone to weep.

14. I have not killed anyone.

15. I have not commanded anyone to kill.

16. I have not done what is harmful to people.

17. I have not reduced the food-offerings of the temples.

18. I have not destroyed the loaves of the divine ones.

19. I have not removed the food-offerings of the blessed ones.

20. I have not committed fornication.

21. I have not ejaculated.

22. I have not reduced the funeral offerings.

23. I have not lessened the acre.(10)

24. I have not encroached upon the fields (of others).

25. I have not added to the weight of the scales.

26. I have not taken anything from the plummet of the scales.

27. I have not taken milk from the mouth of children.

28. I have not deprived small cattle of their pasture.

29. I have not trapped birds in the sacred reeds.

30. I have not caught fish with (the bait of) their bodies.

31. I have not held back water in its season.

32. I have not damned water when it was flowing.

33. I have not put out a fire when it should burn.

34. I have not neglected the days of making choice meat offerings.

35. I have not driven away cattle upon the property of God.

36. I have not blocked God in his going forth.

I am pure. (4 times) My purity is the purity of that great phoenix which is in Heracleopolis. For I am indeed the nose of the Lord of Breath who sustains all people on this day of completing the eye in On (11) on the last day of the second month of winter, in the presence of the lord of this land. Nothing evil will happen to me in this land in this Great Hall of Maati. For I know the names of these divinities which are in it; (the followers of the great God).

4.4.3 Declarations of Innocence (B)

4.4.3.1 The Transliteration

1. *n ir.i isft*
2. n ʿw3.i
3. *n ʿwn-ib.i*
4. *n ṯ3w.i*
5. *n sm3.i rmṯ*
6. *n hḏ.i dbḥw*
7. *n ir.i ẖ3bt*
8. *n ṯ3w.i ḫt Nṯr*
9. *n dḏ.i grg*
10. *n nḥm.i wnmt*

11. n kni.i
12. n th.i
13. n sm3.i k3w nṯry
14. n ir.i ḥnt
15. n ʿw3.i ḥnbt
16. n smtmt.i
17. n šm.i r.i
18. n sḫwn.i nis ḥr ḫt.i
19. n nk.i ḥmt ṯ3y
20. n d3d3.i
21. n ir.i ḥryt
22. n tḥ.i
23. n t3.i
24. n sẖ.i ḥr mdt nt M3ʿt
25. n ẖnn.i
26. n ṯrm.i
27. n nwḥ.i nk.i
28. n ʿm-ib.i
29. n šnṯw.i
30. n pr.ʿ.i
31. n 3s-ib.i
32. n th.i iwn ....
33. n ʿš3 ḫrw.i hr mdt
34. n ir.i bin
35. n ir šnṯ [niswt]
36. n rhn.i ḥr mw
37. n k3 ḫrw.i
38. n šnṯ.i Nṯr
39. n ir.i šfw
40. n ir.i sṯn r.i
41. n wr ẖrt.i nis m ḫt.i
42. n sḏwy Nṯr m niwt.i

4.4.3.2 The Translation

1. I have not done isfet.
2. I have not stolen.
3. I have not been covetous.
4. I have not robbed.
5. I have not killed people.
6. I have not reduced the requirements (of the temple).
7. I have not done fraudulent things.
8. I have not stolen the property of God.
9. I have not told lies.

10. I have not taken away food.

11. I have not been ill-tempered.

12. I have not transgressed.

13. I have not killed sacred cattle.

14. I have not extorted.

15. I have not stolen bread rations.

16. I have not eavesdropped.

17. I have not been talkative.

18. I have not contended except concerning my own property.

19. I have not committed adultery.

20. I have not been committed fornication.

21. I have not caused fear.

22. I have not mislead.

23. I have not been hot-tempered.

24. I have not been deaf to words of Truth.

25. I have not caused strife.

26. I have not winked (at injustice).

27. I have not practiced illicit sex.

28. I have not been false.

29. I have not quarrelled (with another).

30. I have not been aggressive.

31. I have not been impatient.

32. I have not misrepresented my nature....

33. I have not gossiped about matters.

34. I have not done evil.

35. I have not reviled the (king).

36. I have not waded in water.

37. I have not been loud of voice.

38. I have not blasphemed God.

39. I have not been immodest.

40. I have not made distinctions (of others) from myself.

41. I have not had needs greater than my own property.

42. I have not reviled the divinity of my city.

4.4.4 Address to the Divine Ones

4.4.4.1 The Transliteration

inḏ ḥrw ṯn nṯrw ipw imyw wsht.ṯn nt m3ʿty iw.i rḫ.kwi ṯn rḫ.kwi rnw.ṯn nn ḫr.i n š̆ʿt.ṯn n sʿr.ṯn bn̆.i n Nṯr pn nty tn m-ḫt.f nn iwt sp.i ḫr ṯn ḏd.ṯn m3ʿt r.i m-b3ḥ Nb-r-ḏr ḥr ntt ir.n.i m3ʿt m̆ T3-Mri n šnṯ.i Nṯr n iw sp.i ḥr n̆iswt imy hrw.f

inḏ ḥrw ṯn imyw wsḫt ṯn nt m3ʿty iwty grg m ẖtw.sn ʿnḫyw m m3ʿt sʿmyw m̆ m3ʿt m-b3ḥ Ḥrw imy itn.f nḥm.ṯn wi m̆ʿ b3by ʿnḫ m bskw srw ḥrw pwy n ipt ʿ3t mṯn wi ii.kwi ḫr ṯn nn isft.i nn ḫbnt.i nn ḏwt.i nn mtrw Nn irt.n.i ḫt r.f. ʿnḫ.i m m3ʿt sʿm.i m m3ʿt. iw ir.n.i ḏḏt rmṯ hrrt nṯrw ḥr.s. iw sḥtp.n.i Nṯr m mrrt.f iw rdi.n.i t n ḥkr mw n ib ḥbs n ḥ3wy mẖnt n iwi. iw ir.n.i ḥtp nṯry n nṯrw prt r ḫrw n 3ḫw. nḥm wi irf ṯn ẖw wi irf ṯn. nn smi.ṯn r.i m̆-b3ḥ [N̆ṯr ʿ3] Ink wʿb r wʿb ʿwy, dḏw n.f ii.wy (sp-2) m ẖtp in m33w sw . . . ii.n.i ʿ3 r smtr m3ʿt r rdit iwsw r ʿḥʿw.f m-ẖnw igrt.

4.4.4.2 The Translation

(Then shall the heart which is righteous and without fault say:) (12)

Homage to you, O you divine ones who are in this Great Hall of Maati. I know you. I know your names. I will not fall in fear of you. You shall not accuse me of wrong to this God whom you follow. No case against me shall come before you. You shall speak truth about me before the Lord

of All. For I have done Maat in the Beloved Land (13). I have not blasphemed God. No case against me came before the King during his reign.

Homage to you divine ones of the Great Hall of Maati, who have no lies in their bodies, who live on Maat, who drink of Maat before Horus in his disk. Rescue me from Babi who lives on the entrails of (even) those with high status on this day of the Great Reckoning. Behold me, I come before you, without wrongdoing, without guilt, without evil, without a witness (against me), for there is none against whom I have done anything. I live on Maat. I drink of Maat. I have done what people speak of and that which pleases the divinities. I have satisfied God with that which he loves. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one. I have given divine offerings to the divine ones, and invocation offerings to the departed. Rescue me, then and protect me. Do not complain against me before the Great God. For I am clean of mouth and clean of hands, one to whom it is said, 'Welcome, come in peace' by those who see him/her.... Indeed, I have come here to bear witness to Truth and to set the scales (of justice) in their proper place among those who are silent (or the voiceless). (14)

4.5 The Sitz im Leben of the DOI

The Declarations of Innocence contain two lists of offenses that one affirms that s/he has not committed. The

first list (A) includes thirty-six Declarations directed to the Great God, Lord of Maat. It begins with prefatory remarks which end with the Declaration that the departed and risen has brought Maat and done away with isfet. The second list (B) of Declarations are forty-two in number and are directed to forty assessors or judges who are identified as followers (*šmsw*) of the Great God. In summary, the Declarations are moral claims of being free from the offenses of killing, violent and non-violent injury; robbery and stealing, especially from the vulnerable; the misuse of speech, i.e., lying, slander, blasphemy, loudness; negative emotion such as hot-temperedness, immodesty, ill-temperedness, cheating and deception; and sexual misdeeds. In a word, they represent moral claims of freedom from offenses of thought, emotion, speech and conduct.

After the 42 Declarations, there follows an address to the divine powers of the Great Hall of Maat in which the deceased claims knowledge of the Divine Ones and reaffirms her innocence. He declares that he comes to the Hall of Judgment without wrongdoing, accusation, evil or an accusing witness. Moreover, she declares that Maat is both nourishment and drink for her. Then he asserts a familiar moral claim: "I have done what people speak of and that which pleases the divine powers. I have satisfied God with what he loves. Having given bread to the hungry, water to the

thirsty and clothes to the naked and offerings to the divine ones and the departed."

It is this stress on doing Maat and avoiding isfet, showing preference for the vulnerable and doing what God loves and wills and the people praise, which reveals the Sitz im Leben of the DOI, i.e., the Declarations of Virtue. Out of a long history of the declaring of virtues and disclaiming vices, the DOI emerge as a kind of summing up of the major moral concerns of Kemetic society. As noted above, the moral concerns included in the main body of the DOI focus on a broad range of claims of freedom from vices of thought, emotion, speech and conduct. And in the concluding paragraph, positive moral claims are made of having cared for the vulnerable and done the will of God and the good which elicited the praise of the people. Throughout this long history of the Declarations of Virtue, a rich array of moral claims and concerns emerge which serve as a fertile and fruitful source of categories and concepts from which the New Kingdom authors could and did draw.

Drioton (1922) called attention the this link between the autobiographical moral self-presentations and the DOI and argued that they were the essential source of this New Kingdom development. But as Lichtheim (1992:103) noted, he did not provide an extensive "harvest of bridge-building texts" which would reconstruct the path of this development. Lichtheim (1992:103ff), however, does provide an extensive

textual resource which affirms Drioton's original contention and in the process deals with related issues of judgment and descriptions of afterlife. But again, it is Drioton (1922) who makes this link in his article "Contribution à l'étude du chapitre 125 du livre des morts: les confessions negatives." In this work, he published and translated the Stela of Baki, Steward and Overseer of the Granary, whom he located in the early 18th Dynasty. This date was later challenged by Varille (1954) and Lichtheim (1992:133) who placed Baki in the reign of Amenhotep III and Thutmosis III respectively.

The Stela of Baki (Turin Museum no. 156) proved important in showing the link between the DOI and autobiographical moral self-presentations because it contained: 1) references to many of the desired virtues and shunned vices; 2) the concept of judgment; and 3) the aspiration and description of the afterlife. In his long and inclusive moral self-presentation, Baki says:

I. *htp-di-nswt n k3 n imi-r3 šnwty*
    B3ki m3ʿ ḫrw ḏd.f
ink mty m3ʿ šw m ḫww
di nṯr m ib.f ss3 m b3w.f
iy.n.i r niwt (t)n imit nḥḥ
iw ir.n.i bw-nfr tp t3
n iwḥ.i nn wn.i
n nḏ rn.i ḥr sp nb
ẖsy isft mi-ḳd
ḥʿʿ.i m ḏd m3ʿt
rḫ.kwi 3ḫ.s n ir sy
tp t3 ḏr-ʿ r mny
mwnf pw mnh n ḏd sy
hrw pf n spr.f r ḏ3ḏ3t
wḏʿt s3rw wpt kdww
sswnt isfty dnt b3.f

wnn.i nn wn.i n wnt srh.i
nn isft.i m-b3ḥ.sn pr.i m m3' ḫrw
ḥs.kwi m-m im3ḫyw sb n k3w.sn

II. *imi-r3 pr imi-r3 šnwty B3ki m3' ḫrw ḏd.f*
ink mḥ-ib '3 n nb t3wy
špsy n ir sw ḥsy n bity
in bit.i iḳrt sẖnt st.i
tn wi m-m ḥḥ n rmṯ
m3't.i rwd n Ḥr m-ḫnt ḥr-s3
šnw.i k3.f m pẖr ẖr.f m ḥ't
r dw3 nfr.f m ẖrt-hrw
m sw3š w3ḏty.f r tr nb

III. *imi-r3 šnwty B3ki m3' ḫrw ḏd.f*
ink s'ḥ ḥr hr M3't
sni r ḥpw wsḫt m3'ty
ḫmt.n.i spr.i r ẖrt-nṯr
nn nḏyt ntt rn.i ḥr.s
n ir.i ḏwt r rmṯ
ṯsst nt nṯrw.sn
'ḥ'w.i m 'nḫ n m3'w
r pḥ.i im3ḫ im nfr
iw.i m ḥswt nt ḫr nswt
mrwt.i ḫr snyw.f
pr-nswt tm m imity.f
nn ḏwt ir.n.i m ib.sn
rmṯ n s3-pr mitt iry
ḥ''.sn m bit.i iḳrt
rn.i nḏ m stp-s3
m nb ḳd ir bw m3'
nfr.i m ib n it.i mwt.i
mrwt.i m-ẖnw ẖwt.sn
n sp t3ḫ sn mi ir.n.i ḫr.sn tp t3
tr.i '3.i wšd.n.i nḏs.i
nn ḫwr.i mnḫ r.i
nḏwt r3.i m ḏd bw nfr
nn ṯs 'ḥ3 ḏdt.n.i

IV. *sḏmw nn mitt ḏdt.n.i*
rmṯ nbt wnnyw
hrw ḥr m3't m ẖrt-hrw
mḥrw nn irt s3wt
nṯr nb 3bḏw 'nḫ.f im.s r' nb
ir.ṯn st 3ḫ n.ṯn
sb.ṯn 'ḥ'w m nḏm-ib
r ḥtp <m> imntt nfrt
b3.tn sḫm m 'ḳ prt
wstnw mi nbw nḥḥ
ḏdw ḫft p3wtyw

I. A royal offering to the ka of the overseer
of the granary Baki, justified, he says:
I am one truly upright, free of wrongdoing,
One who placed God in his heart and who knows
his might
I have come to this city of eternity
having done good on earth.
I did not rob. I was without fault,
my name was not mentioned for any offense
nor vileness and evil in any respect.
I rejoiced in speaking truth
for I knew it benefits the one who does it
on earth from birth to landing.
It is an effective defense for one who speaks it
on the day he arrives at the court,
which judges the needy and assesses
characters
which punishes the wrongdoer and destroys his Ba.
I am without blame, there is no accuser of me.
There is no wrong of mine before them, thus may I
go forth justified,
and praised among the worthy ones who have joined
their ka's.

II. The steward and overseer of the granary Baki,
justified, says:
I was a great confident of the Lord-of-the-Two-Lands,
Valuable to the one who made him, one praised by
the king;
It was my good character that advanced my rank,
and distinguished me out among millions of men.
My Maat was firm for Horus in front and in back,
I surrounded his ka with service to him in joy
praising his goodness day by day,
and paying homage to his twin serpents at all times.

III. The overseer of the granary of Baki, justified says:
I am a noble pleased with Maat,
who conformed to the laws of the Hall of Maati;
for I planned to reach the cemetery
without baseness attached to my name.
I did not do evil to people (or) that which
offends their divinities
My lifetime was lived with a good wind
in order that I might reach an excellent state of
honor there.
I had the favor of the king
and the love of his attendants;
As for the whole palace and its occupants,
in their mind I had done no wrong.
The people in back likewise,
They rejoiced at my excellent character;

My name was pronounced in the palace
as a person of character who does Maat.
My goodness was in the heart of my father and
    my mother,
love of me was in their bodies;
No (child) equalled my acting for them on earth,
I respected my senior and conceded to my junior.
I did not speak ill of one worthier than me.
My advice was to speak good
There was no hostile word which I spoke.

IV. Listen to this as I have told it,
all you people who exist:
Be satisfied with Maat daily,
It is food that does not over satisfy,
The Lord God of Abydos lives on it daily.
If you do this, you will benefit (from it)
You will spend life's time in happiness,
Till there's rest in the beautiful West,
Your Ba will have the power to come in and go out
free striding like the lords of eternity,
enduring like primeval ones.

Baki's autobiographical text is clearly one of the most inclusive and definitive moral self-presentations which prefigure and make possible the summary of Maatian concerns we find in the Declarations of Innocence. His concern is clearly for a Maat-infused and Maat-informed life which gives him success, honor and happiness in this life "from birth to landing." But he is also concerned about his worthiness among men and women, people of the palace and elsewhere who would love him, "rejoice at his good character" and cause his name to endure "as a man of character who does right."

It is important to note that Baki's moral self-portrait is preceded by autobiographical moral self-presentations that extend back to the Old Kingdom and include concerns for standard moral virtues and vices, the concept of judgment

and the aspiration for the afterlife (Maystre, 1937:1). These declarations of virtue, then, provide the essential *Sitz im Leben* of the Declarations of Innocence. However, there are several essential differences between the DOI and the moral self-presentations. The first is that the moral self-presentations are more often positive declarations of virtues, whereas the DOI are disclaimers of vices, although denials of vices appear also in the Declarations of Virtue and positive Declarations of Virtue are presented in the DOI in the closing address to the Divine powers.

Secondly, the DOV are often intertwined with professional presentations and appeals to the living, whereas the DOI are focused exclusively on moral presentation. Thirdly, the DOV, given their number and variation, of necessity, include considerations the DOI do not contain. Certainly, the concern for corruption, in terms of taking bribes for unfair judicial rulings, is a central concern of the DOV and the Sebait, but do not appear in the DOI. There is, however, possible allusion to this vice in the Declarations of Innocence which say, "I have not been deaf to truth" and "I have not winked at injustice." A final difference is that there is more attention to ritual purity in the DOI than in the DOV. And whereas these concerns of a ritual nature are often seen as simply "cultic" they remain also ethical in that they are concerned with right and wrong

especially in relation to the formulators' and practitioners' concern for and conception of God's will.

It is of value to note here before turning to other examples of moral self-presentations which lay the ground for the DOI, that there is a school of thought that argues that the declarations of virtue and purity inscribed on temple entrances during the Ptolemaic period are the actual *Sitz im Leben* of the Declarations of Innocence (Greishammer, 1974, 1970:58). However, as Lichtheim (1992:127) and Griffiths (1991:218ff) have argued, this is not a supportable contention for at least three basic reasons. First, there is the problem of the anteriority of the autobiographies and the lack of concrete evidence that the priestly instructions existed in earlier periods. Although Merkelbach (1968, 1969) pointed out the parallels of priestly declarations to the DOI, he did not argue that they were sources of the DOI. Likewise, Fairman (1958), who collected some of these declarations from the Edfu Temple, does not draw the parallels between the two genres of text. He concentrates instead on the text of the Goddess Seshat in which she states she has come to "set down in writing...the doer of good and the doer of evil" (Edfou, V 334:1-6). The description of the doer of isfet and the doer of Maat clearly resemble the descriptions in the DOV. The doer of evil is one who lies, cheats and is unclean. But the doer of good is one who "knows right from wrong, is clean, is upright and

walks in the way of righteousness." Still, however, this text emulates the autobiographical self-presentations which are prior and in fact lay the bases for these later texts.

Secondly, as both Lichtheim and Griffiths notes, the focus and nature of the priestly texts are narrower than the universal character and thrust of the DOV and DOI. The priestly concerns around worthiness to be a priest and to enter the temple carry a strata, group and institutional limitation not evident in the DOV and DOI. An example of such a priestly affirmation of innocence is the following taken from Merkelbach (1969:70).

> I have not eaten what is forbidden for a priest.
> I have cut off no living being's head.
> I killed no one
> I have not slept with the wife of another.
> I have neither eaten nor drunk what is forbidden
> or is shown in the books (as forbidden).
> I have not made long fingers (not stolen).
> I have taken no scales in hand.
> I have measured no land
> I have entered no unclean place.
> I have touched no sheep's wool.

This, of course, has some prohibitions cited in the DOI, but again clearly these are group-focused and do not carry the universal weight or appeal of the DOI.

The virtues required in the DOI and DOV texts, however, clearly overlap and interrelate and are presented as binding on all and rewarding for all. This includes even the king as the Sebait for Merikara shows with regard to the reward of righteousness at judgment. It is also attested in the 18th Dynasty in which part of the Declarations of Innocence

appear on the sarcophagus of Thutmosis IV (Kákosky, 1981: 264), a fact which reaffirms that the king is subject to the same process of moral assessment as the masses. Moreover, even in the Late Period, there is strong concern that the moral law (*hp*) is upheld (Lorton, 1986). This is, in fact, a concern for the upholding of Maat, for *hp*, increasingly *hp(w)*, carries the meaning of "law, right and justice" and is synonymous with the abstract concept of Maat which is clearly rooted in the ancient tradition of Kemet (Lloyd, 1982).

A third reason that the Ptolemaic priestly inscriptions cannot be posed as the *Sitz im Leben* of the DOI is the anteriority of the concept of judgment. Indeed the concept of judgment which underlies and informs the DOI and DOV is prior to and thus informative for the priestly declarations. The evolution of this concept will be treated below. It should be noted in conclusion, however, that there is a definite relationship between the priestly texts and the Declarations of Innocence. This is due to the fact that both are concerned with criteria for entry into a sacred place, made holy (*d̲sr*) by the presence of the Divine (Hoffmeier, 1985). Moreover, both require Maat for admission whether in the temple or otherworld. And finally, the evidence suggests that both are linked to and rooted in the Declarations of Virtues which clearly appear in varied forms in both genres of texts.

Affirmations of innocence or virtues phrased as the shunning of vices appear early in the moral tradition of ancient Egypt. The early Declarations of Virtue in the Old Kingdom attest to this phrasing and focus on moral worthiness. The priest Werhuu in the 5th Dynasty, after saying he did Maat in his city and district, says, "I never did what was hurtful to anyone and I never let anyone spend the night angry with me about a matter . . ." (Urk. I:46.8ff). Hetep-her-akhet says, "I never took the property of anyone and I never did anything by force against anyone" (Urk. I:50. 1ff). Seshem-nefer (Urk. I:57.15f) says, "I never spoke an evil thing against people . . ." and Nekhebu (Urk. I:219. 6ff), says the same thing in his moral self-presentation. In this period, however, in spite of these examples, the phrasing remains predominantly positive as demonstrated in Chapter II.

In the Middle Kingdom the DOV still remains positive for the most part, but there are clear examples of an increase in affirmations of innocence through denials of wrongdoing. The text of the Steward Montuweser of the 12th Dynasty is an example of this (Ransom, 1913:16, 24; Sethe, 1913:79-80). He says:

ink m3w r ind
ḳrsw mty dd(w) ht n nty snw
\- - - - - - - -
ink hd̲ ḥr (ḥ3 t3) wnmt
nn 3hw ṅ dḋ.i n.f
iw psš wr n iwf n ḥmsw r gs.i
ink mry h3w.f
sd̲mi.n(.i) n 3bt.f

n ḥbs(.i) ḥr(.i) r nṯy(w) m b3kw
ink it n nmḥ sm ẖ3rt
n sḏr s ḥḳr r dmi.i
n isḳ(.i) s m mẖnt
n dsi.i s wsr.i r.f
n ʿḥʿ.i ḥr n nḏwyt
nn ink mdw(.i) r r-ʿwy srw
šwy m ḏd p3w
ink sḏmw r wn-m3ʿ
tm nmʿ(.i) n nb ḏb3w

I am one who is attentive to the miserable.
I am one who buried the dead and gave goods
to one who was in poverty.
I was generous with provisions of food.
There was no misery for one to whom I gave.
I shared the choicest cut of meat with those
who sat at my side.

I am one beloved of his relatives, one to whom
him family is attached.
I did not cover my face against those who were
my servants.
I was a father to the orphan, support to the
widow.
No one slept hungry in my town.
I did not hinder a man at the ferry.
I did not slander a man to his superior.
I was not indulgent with evil.
I did not speak against the deeds of the officials.
I was one free from speaking falsehood.
I was one who listened to Maat and was not partial
toward the possessor of rewards.

The list of denials here are not only similar to those of the DOI, but also are more numerous than in Old Kingdom texts. They thus represent a change in the formulation which will take its most definitive form in the New Kingdom and serve as a central source of the DOI.

Clearly, the 18th Dynasty represents the definitive period for the development of the Declarations of Virtue which give both form and content to the Declarations of Innocence in the 125th Chapter of the Book of Coming Forth

By Day. An excellent example of this is the DOV in the autobiography of the sage Amenhotep, son of Hapu who lived and served during the reign of Amenhotep III in the early 18th Dynasty (Urk. IV:1827.14-20; 1828.1-8). In his prayer to Amun-Ra, he says:

di.k wni.i m-m ḥsyw iryw M3't
ink m3'
n rdi.n.i ḥr gs
n sm3.n.i m ir bw-ḏw
n rdi.i 'nḫ ḥr ḳsn.f m nty r ḫt.i ḥr ḳ3wt
n nis s pw m tp-m3'.i
mkḥ3.i r sḏm ḏd.f
n rdi(.i) irtw ḥ3w

n ḫ'm.i ir.n.i
n rdi.i ḥr.i r sḏm iwms r sḏwy ky m ḥryw.f
iw ḳd.i mtr.f iryt n.i
iww m-b3ḥ ḥr nb
in m33 wi nḥt(y)f(y) mi kd.i
n wr ḫprwt n.i
mtrw n M3't m i3w.i
ph.i rnpwt 80 wr ḥsw ḫr niswt
iw.i r kmt rnpwt 110

Grant that I may be among the favored ones who
are doers of Maat
For I am upright
I have not been biased
I have not associated with the doer of evil.
I did not swear at one in difficulty of those
in my crew in building works.
There was no man who called at my side
That I neglected to hear what he said
I did not impose excess work.
Nor did I press those who worked for me.
I did not pay attention to untruths in order to
slander another to his superior.
My reputation bears witness to what I did
It is before everyone
He who sees me will pray to be like me.
Because great was that which happened to me.
My old age is witness to the truth.
I have reached 80 years greatly favored by
the King.
And I will complete 110 years.

Moreover, Horemheb, scribe of recruits, offers a similar prayer saying:

> Let your hearts rejoice, O' lords of eternity.
> And glorious and excellent spirits of the
> land of the departed
> Behold, I have come to this land of the living
> to be with you in this sacred land
> I am one of you
> My hatred is evil
> I have come on the good path of the upright
> In order to make whole all my limbs
> Then will my soul live, being divine and
> great with spiritual power.
> (Urk. IV:1590.1-8)

The conceptual link of these declarations of virtue and others similar with the DOI are obvious. The claim of righteousness and the request for moral acceptance in the Hereafter among the doers of Maat is reflected in the DOI and related passages in Chapter 125 of Coming Forth. The denial phrasing of having avoided a given vice also appears in the two genres of texts and are in some cases almost identical. Thus, the genealogical link is established and the line of development easily followed.

4.6 Maatian Moral Theology

4.6.1 Fundamental Concepts

The hinge and hub upon which Maatian moral theology turns is the concept of judgment which carries with it two correlative concepts--justification (vindication) and immortality. It is this triadic conceptual cluster which is one of ancient Egypt's most significant and enduring gifts to humanity. Appearing first in Kemet, this concept spread elsewhere and contributed greatly to human religious and

ethical development. As Brandon (1967:41) informs us, this "conception of the post-mortem judgment finds its most complete expression in the Book of the Dead," and it "represents a most significant achievement in both the history of religion and of ethics."

In fact, this idea of "judgment after death symbolized by the balance or scales can be traced on into the Roman period of Egyptian religion," passing into Coptic Christianity, into the Jewish texts, into Greek thought and ultimately finding "expression in medieval Christian art with the archangel Michael assuming the role of Master of the Balance which Thoth had held in ancient Egypt," (Brandon, 1967:45). Samir Amin, also stresses the relevance of this idea to world intellectual history. He (1989:17) states, in his critique of Eurocentric claims to all major achievements, that "[b]efore any other people, the Egyptians introduced the concept of eternal life and immanent moral justice, opening the way for humanist universalism." In fact he (1989:18) contends, "the universalist moral break-through of the Egyptians is the keystone of subsequent human thought." And only after centuries of development does this Kemetic contribution become "commonplace" and expresses itself in "debates between Christianity and Islam concerning Hell and Paradise, individual responsibility and determinism, the foundations of belief."

As Spiegel (1935:14-15) points out,

> The essence of this idea lies in the thought that each deceased person must appear in the next world before a court in order to give an account there of his past life and that the result of the trial decides his place in the next world. The standard by which life is measured there is an ethical norm...the significance of which is not based on earthly circumstances, but on an absolute standard of justice.

Drioton (1949:16ff) also pointed to the centrality of the idea of justice in this concept and argued that the concept of judgment was rooted in a long identifiable moral tradition. Certainly, the central ethical norm here is Maat. For Maat is the basis for continuation on earth and in the afterlife. As Assmann (1990:126) states, Maat "regiert Diesseits und Jenseits. Wer sich mit ihr efüllt ist jenseits-wurdig" as well as "diesseits-wurdig." Thus, Maat "verschafft dem Menschen nicht nur einen Platz im sozialen Gedächtnis der Gruppe, sondern auch im Jenseits, in der Götterwelt."

Central to the idea of judgment, then, is the concept and aspiration of eternal life through righteousness. In fact, the title of the Book of Coming Forth By Day, itself, is a reflection and affirmation of this central and ancient spiritual quest. But as early as the Pyramid Texts, there is written evidence of the ancient Egyptian rejection of death as the end of life and the quest for immortality through having been judged righteous (*m3ʿ ḫrw*) after death. This rejection is expressed clearly in their designating

death, itself, "repeating life (*wḥm ʿnḫ*) <u>wehem ankh</u>. Therefore, as Budge states, "the attainment of a renewal of life in the other world was the aim and object of every Egyptian believer" (Budge, 1960: 66ff).

Thus, we read in Coming Forth (Chapter 154) the deceased and risen praying to the Divine, saying:

> May you let me go down to eternity . . . . I have not done what you hate. May your spirit love me and not reject. me. May you receive me in your following. May I not decay. . . .

Or again, one prays "Let me ascend thither as one justified in the presence of the Council of the Great God on the day of setting (passing) and going forth unto the Ennead that is in God's domain" (Chapter 65). Moreover, the deceased and justified declares, "I live after my death like Ra everyday" (Chapter 38 and 38A). And finally, the deceased and risen prays saying, "May you rescue me from the messengers who suppress evil and inflict punishment, whose faces show no pity, for I have done Maat for the lord of Maat" (Chapter 125).

But even earlier, we see evidence of belief in and the quest for immortality in the <u>Pyramid Texts</u>, we read: "You have departed living, you have not departed dead" (*šm.n.k ʿnḫ.k n sm.n.k is mwt.k*) (PT 833a). And also one reads: "Teti has not died the death; he has become a glorious one in the horizon." "You have departed that you might live;" "This Pepi dies not." "Have you said that he would die? He does not; this King Pepi lives forever" (Breasted, 1934:70).

Repeatedly, one finds evidence that the ancient Egyptians refuse to accept death as final. Opinions vary on the reason for this (Spencer, 1982; Zandee, 1960). But it seems to reflect both the religious rootedness of their quest for immortality and the reality of ambivalence toward "passage to paradise" religious adherents of all faiths tend to have.

Morenz (1984:205), along with other Egyptologists, have called the Maatian concept of immortality a "denial of death." But one could easily make the same claim concerning Paul's discourse on resurrection, the Christian longing for an afterlife. Morenz (1984:190) realizes this and after citing Paul's to-die-is-to-live-again contention (Philli-pians, I, 21, 23), he argues that "We must be careful not to place on the same footing as the word of the Apostle such positive sounding circumlocutions for death as 'the good fortune' or even the use of its opposite 'life' . . ." which the ancient Egyptian used to refer to death. But by what logic except a Eurocentric or Christian centered one is the ancient Egyptian view of death as "repeating life" or "liv-ing again" in the spiritual realm less real than similar Christian claims? The reality is that even as Christians who believe in immortality and yet do not wish to die, so do others have similar contradictory or ambivalent emotions. The reality is that it is not the "denial of death" that ancient Egyptians engaged in but rather the denial of the effective power of death over life. And as Tobin (1989:130)

states, "this denial of the effective power of death indicates that in the mind of the Egyptian death was in fact the beginning of life," i.e., eternal life.

Much has been written about Kemetic belief in the resurrection of the physical body as evidenced by the practice of mummification and even the passage about not letting the body decay which is cited above. But although there are passages about the body not decaying and about one knitting oneself back together bone by bone and member by member, there are also passages which stress that it is the spirit that is immortal and that "the soul belongs to heaven; the body belongs to earth--*b3 r pt h̲3t r t3*" (Budge, 1960: 68). Budge (1960:69) is correct in asserting that "the preservation of the corruptible body . . .was in some way connected with life in the world to come, and its existence was necessary to insure eternal life, otherwise the prayers recited to this end would have been futile and the time-honored custom of mummifying the dead would have no meaning."

But it is still not clear why the preservation of the body was necessary. A plausible explanation is that the ancient Egyptians believed that the various physical and spiritual parts of the human personality--ka (vital energy), ba (soul), khet (body), akh (transformed spirit), ren (name), ib (heart/mind), and shuit (shadow) "were bound together inseparably and the welfare of any single one of

them concerned the welfare of all" (Budge, 1960:81). Therefore, what one has here is a complex set of beliefs which unite the physical and spiritual in a holistic conception of reciprocal effect (Finnestad, 1986). It is a topic which obviously requires much more research and analysis and which unfortunately space and announced focus will not allow here.

However, in spite of the complex and often esoteric character of the theology of eternal life which evolves in the Pyramid Texts and which is expressed in the New Kingdom concept of "coming forth," it can be discussed under five basic analytical categories: a) resurrection; b) ascension; c) judgment; d) acceptance; and e) transformation. The concept of judgment has been treated above and will be treated throughout this discussion because it is the core of Maatian moral theology of eternal life. To come forth by day, from the darkness of death and the tomb to the light and eternal life of the other world is the fundamental foundation on which the teachings on immortality stand. As I stated above, coming forth is essentially breaking the bonds of death and grave and emerging to bask in sunlight, i.e., the rays of Ra in the spiritual sense. This is resurrection, rising from the dead like Osiris and repeating life through righteousness (Otto, 1968; Griffiths, 1980). As the Coffin Texts (CT IV:168) state, "I die and I live, for I am Osiris" (*mt.i ʿnḫ.i ink Wsir*).

Also in the Book of Vindication, we read "O' seeker of vindication, the earth opens its mouth for you; it opens its jaws in your behalf. May you reach the Great Stairway and arrive at the Sacred City" (CT I:12-13). Moreover, the texts say "The Lord of the earth will open your blind eyes and straighten out your bent knees for you. And you will be given your heart which came from your mother (and) belongs to your body, and your soul which was on earth . . ." (CT I:56). Therefore, the departed are resurrected and they pray as in the Book of Coming Forth By Day,

> May I not be judged according to the mouth of the multitude. May my soul lift itself up before my heart and be found to have been prosperous on earth. May I come into your presence O' Lord of Lords; may I reach the Hall of Righteousness (Maati). May I rise like a living god and give forth light like the divine powers that are in heaven. (BCF, Chap. 1)

Secondly, then, the concept of immortality or coming forth involves *ascension*, i.e., rising like Ra, ascending into heaven to be judged and transformed into an imperishable spirit, i.e., an *3ḫ*. In the Book of Vindication (CT I: 58-60), one reads:

> Hail vindicated one. Come that you may rise up in the heavens. The ladder at the side of Ra has been assembled for you among the powers of heaven . . . . You shall walk upon your own feet and you shall not walk with your head downward.

Or again we read: "The doors of heaven are opened (to you) because of your virtue. May you ascend and see Hathor. May any case against you be canceled" (CT I:181). Also in the *Pyramid Texts* (654-656), it says,

> Rise up O' vindicated one. Take hold of your head. Gather together your bones, collect your limbs and shake the dust from your flesh . . . . Stand at the gates that bar those with no name. Lo, the gatekeeper comes out to you. He takes hold of your hand and takes you to heaven to you Father.

Thus, resurrection is followed by ascension and both are made possible by a Maatian life. Finally, we read that through righteousness the departed flies "up to heaven in the company of (his) brothers and sisters, the powers of heaven" using his/her arms like wings of a hawk (PT 459-461). This ascension imagery is also attested in the New Kingdom in the Book of Coming Forth By Day (Chap. 15). For example one reads "Osiris, N, you ascend to the sky, you cross the (watery firmament) . . . ." Also one reads "the truly justified . . .you are lifted up to heaven. You rise from the eastern horizon of the sky, on the uplifted of Shu, on the path to perpetuity, on the way to eternity." Three images of ascension emerge from the texts: one of a ladder or stairway being placed for the departed to ascend; the departed's rising as a spirit, and finally, his/her rising by flying to heaven like a hawk, an obvious reference to Horus, son of Osiris, whose symbol is the hawk rising in the form of another bird. But regardless of the symbolic analogy used, ascension remains at the heart and center of coming forth.

A third aspect of coming forth is acceptance and welcome into the company of God and his following. An important prayer in the Book of Coming Forth (Chap. 1) says:

> May the Lords of the Sacred Land receive me and give me threefold praise in peace. May they make a seat for me besides the Elder of the Council. May I ascend in the presence of the Beneficent One. And may I assume whatever form I want in whatever place my spirit wishes to be.

One aspires, then, to be a favored one in the following of the Great God and to be allowed to sit among the divine ones because of his or her righteousness. Thus, we read in the sacred writings where the vindicated one is commanded to go take his/her place among the divine ones (*n<u>t</u>rw*).

> Go and open the mansion of the soul beyond . . . . If you find the powers of heaven seated, you shall sit with them. Receive then this scepter of yours which is at the feet of Ra and your rod which is at the feet of the morning star. (CT I: 273-274)

And another prayer in Coming Forth says: as "I am one whose mouth is pure and whose hands are clean...let it be said to me: 'Welcome come in peace' by those who shall see me" (BCF, Chap. 125).

Fourthly, the vindicated one is transformed into a living spirit in the process of coming forth. S/he is Osiris, one with Ra, and any other divine power (*n<u>t</u>r*) s/he wishes to be. As quoted above, the prayer is "May I assume whatever form I want, in whatever place my spirit wishes to be." Or again, the sacred writings say, having been vindicated,

> I stand up like Horus, (beloved son and avenger of his father). I sit down as Ptah (Creator who laid the foundations of the universe). I have grown as strong as Djehuti (wisdom exalted). I have become as powerful as Atum (Ra as the perfecter). I have entered as a falcon and come forth as a phoenix. Morning star make way for me, so that I may adore Ra in the (beautiful paradise of) the West. (BCF, Chap. 11)

Also, we read the vindicated declaring now, "I am s/he who is one with God. I have become He." Or "I shine like Ra daily. I establish truth and expel falsehood. I open the doors which are in the abyss below" (CT I:310; CT II:149).

Furthermore, we read in the sacred writings the vindicated saying s/he has been transformed into a series of mighty spirits (*3ḫw*). This is, as stated above, assimilation with God and the divine through righteousness and as aspiration to transform oneself into any form in any place one's spirit wishes to be. Therefore, we read the vindicated one declaring,

> I am the Lion, the Double Lion and the greatest of his priesthood. I am Horus, the Uniter. I am he (she) who brings stillness after the storm. I am Isis in Chemmis (taking refuse from Seth, the evil one) and I will listen like one who is deaf and strains to see. I am Lord of the Earth, who entered the earth. I am he (she) who evaluates whoever serves him (her). *I am transformed into one whose spirits are mighty* (italics mine). I am one with Ra, Lord of His Two Land, and am he (she) who is put behind Him. I am the waters and the earth. (CT VII:30)

It is in these four aspects, then, resurrection, ascension, welcome and transformation and the fifth, judgment (which in the process is third), that the concept of immortality is rooted.

Finally, the combined ideas of judgment, justification and immortality in the afterlife are well-expressed in 18th Dynasty Declarations of Virtues, hymns and prayers. The royal steward, Kheruf under Amenhotep II, asks that Ra grant

> a happy remembrance in the presence of the solar Disk, Pendurance in the mouth of the living, Glory, power, justification and contentment in the place of the righteous. (ES, 1980:Pl.83A)

Saist, royal scribe, living in the reign of Amenhotep III, says,

> *spr.kwi r iw n m3ˁtyw*
> *nn bt3.i tp t3*
> *irw n.i mnywt nḥḥ nˁyt ḏt*
>
> I have arrived at the isle of the
>   righteous ones without
> an offense of mine on earth.
> Thus may a mooring post of eternity and a
>   landing post of everlastingness be made
>   for me. (Urk. IV:1928.4-7)

Likewise, Khaemhat, the royal scribe and overseer of the granaries under Amenhotep III says,

> *h3n sš nswt imi-r3 šnwty Ḫˁ-m-ḥ3t*
>   *pn r ẖrt.nṯr*
> *swt m m3ˁ-ḫrw tp t3*
> *n ḫpr srḫ.f*
> *n wṇt ṯsst im.f ḫr wˁtw n stp-s3*
> *spr.n.f r wsḫt n m3ˁty*
> *gm.n.t(w.f) m sšmw.f nb r-ˁ mḫ3t*
> *m-b3ḥ nṯrw imiw.s*
> *iw ip.n sw Ḏhwty m m3ˁ-ḫrw*
> *m ḏ3ḏ3t n nṯr nb nṯrt nb*
> *iḫ nḏ.tn ḥr.f s3ḫ.tn sw*
> *m ḏb3 nfrw.f* (Urk. IV:1846.17-1847.5)
>
> The royal scribe and overseer of the granary
>   Khaemhat descended to the graveyard
> as one justified on earth.
> He had no accuser.
> There was no complaint against him
>   by the unique one of the palace
> He reached the Hall of the Two Truths

He was examined in all his conduct at the balance
before the divine powers who are in it
(The Great Hall).
Djehuti assessed him as one true of voice.
In the tribunal of all the divine powers,
male and female
Thus, may you welcome him and transfigure him
As a reward for his virtue.

Here concepts of judgment, justification and the reward of immortality are succinctly posed. One sees the claim of a righteous life on earth and the absence of accusation or complaint by one fellow or the king. Khaemhat reaches the Hall of Judgment in righteousness and his righteousness is reaffirmed by the great assessor, Djehuti. And then appeal is made that he be welcomed in the afterlife and transfigured (*s3ḫ*) as a reward for his goodness or virtue (*nfrw*).

The autobiography of Pentu, chief physician during the Amarna Period offers still another conception of the afterlife which is the reward of the righteous. He says:

di.k ḥtp.i m st.i nt nḥḥ
ẖnm.i tpḥt nt ḏt
pr.i 'ḳ m ẖnw ḥwt.i
nn ḫni b3.i m mrrt.f
st̆wt.i r dd ib.i m mnw sk ir.n(.i) tp t3
swri. mw ḥr m3' n š.i r' nb nn ibw

Grant that I may rest in my place of eternity
Joined to the cavern of never-endingness.
May I go out and come in my home
And my soul not be restrained from what it wishes.
May I stride as my heart desires in the grove I
made while on earth.
And drink water on the bank of the lake every day
without fail. (Sandman, 1938:49.3-5)

And finally, S3-tp-iḥw, governor of the Thinite district under Hatshepsut, offers still another vision of the

afterlife as a reward of doing Maat also (Urk. IV:518.7-15), saying,

> *3ḫ m pt*
> *wsr m t3*
> *m3ʿ ḫrw ḫnti ẖrt-nṯr*
> *wḥm ʿnḫ m-ḫt ḳbḥ*
> *šbw pw n iwty ḏwt.f*
> *m3ʿty pw šsp sw*
> *ḥsb.t(w).f ḫft imiw-b3ḥ*
> *wnn rn.f mn m mnw*
> *n ḥtm.n irt.n.f r t3*
>
> A spirit in heaven
> A power on earth
> Justified in the grave
> And living again after becoming cold.
> These are the gifts to the person without evil.
> It is the Maatian person who receives them.
> He will be counted among the ancestors.
> His name will remain as a monument.
> And what he has done will not perish on earth.

Thus, these and similar texts point to and reaffirm a clear conception of judgment, the need for a Maatian life and the rewards of the afterlife for the Maatian person and in this, serve as a rich source for a similar literature in the Book of Coming Forth By Day.

4.6.2 Evolution of the Idea of Judgment

This conceptual cluster of judgment, justification and immortality finds its earliest expression in the corpus of religious texts called the Pyramid Texts which are, as stated above, root sources of the genealogy of the Book of Coming Forth By Day (Griffiths, 1980; Brandon, 1967). This corpus of texts was first found on the walls of the Pyramid of Unas, the last king of the Fifth Dynasty (Piankoff, 1969) and the four major kings of the Sixth Dynasty, Teti, Pepi I,

Mernere and Pepi II (Faulkner, 1969; Mercer, 1952). Later, additional texts were discovered in the pyramids of three queens of Pepi II and also in the pyramid of an Eighth Dynasty king, Ibi. Although these texts date from 2424-2135 B.C.E., it is common scholarly opinion that they contain material much older. As Breasted (1934:71), Mercer (1952: 6ff) and others noted, the contents of the texts are varied, including, prayers, evocations, rituals, hymns, fragments of theological narratives, and basic moral ideals that present conceptions and categories of moral discourse essential to Egyptian ethical thought and practice as expressed in the Declarations of Innocence.

Thus, a complex of moral and religious ideas exists early in Egyptian history as expressed in the Pyramid Texts. And these ideas not only reflect royal conceptions about the moral implications of life and death but also those of ordinary folk (Brandon, 1967:8; Yoyotte, 1961:26; Kees, 1956: 106). Passages appear in texts which seem to attest to popular influence in the conception and writing of the text, not in a direct way, but possibly in an indirect way. Discussion about not being "seized in the name of the king or magistrates" in PT 1041-43 and the statement that "this (person) has not slandered (*snt*) the king" in PT 892 as well as other similar ones suggest offenses ordinary persons would be accused of and had to be innocent of as in the Declarations. As Brandon (1967:8) states,

> (t)he priests, who compiled the Pyramid Texts for royal mortuary use, must have utilized certain material that derived from the mortuary rituals of ordinary persons who could, of course, have been accused of crimes against the pharaoh or punished for other offensives under the civil code.

Two points are important here. The first is that the moral ideal of ancient Egypt evolves not simply as a royal conception but also as one which is rooted in and reflective of general moral ideas and religious beliefs of the masses. This does not deny preponderance of the royal or scribal (*sš*) input in the early formulation of the moral ideal of ancient Egypt. On the contrary, it simply calls attention to the fact that attempts to categorize Egypt's moral ideal as little more than "royal propaganda" by some authors are not always analytically productive and are usually conceptually flawed and often reductive (Posener, 1969; Baines, 1991). Secondly, as stated above, the idea of everyone being subjected to judgment is central to Maatian ethics. This means that in spite of the pharaoh's status and role as divine representative of God on earth, son and daughter of Ra, he or she is still subjected to divine judgment on the criteria of Maat. And it is this process of judgment of all after death that is at the center of the moral ideal and concern found in the Declarations of Innocence.

Breasted (1934:127) correctly contends that "(t)he Pyramid Texts contain unequivocal evidence that the demands of justice and righteousness were mightier than the king."

Thus the Texts declare: "This King Pepi is justified. There is no evil which King Pepi has done." And the Text of Unas says that Unas has come to heaven "as a divine power (n<u>t</u>r) comes to his shore" without accusation of the living or dead, beast or bird (PT 386). Furthermore, the text of Pepi says, "O Boatman of the boatless righteous, . . .Pepi is righteous before heaven and earth" (PT 1188).

Junker (1949) also points out that judgment after death was a requirement for kings as well as ordinary persons and compares the requirements of righteousness and the king's denial of wrong and declarations of virtue with the <u>Declarations of Innocence</u>. This last point is an important one, for in addition to reports that the king has acted as Ra and put Maat (truth, justice, order) in the place of isfet (falsehood, injustice and disorder), there is another positive declaration of having done good and wanting to be justified by it. In <u>Pyramid Text</u> (316d-17a), as noted above, one reads that the king wishes to be justified or vindicated by what he has done (*mr.f m3' ḫrw m irt.n.f*).

The process of vindication or justification is the end product of the judgment process which includes: a) coming in and bringing Maat (*int m3't*); b) declaring innocence against any accuser; c) declaring innocence of offenses against God, humans and nature; d) having one's heart weighed in the Balance; e) being declared *m3' ḫrw*, and thus, f) being welcomed into the company of the divine ones. Although this

process of vindication is usually thought of as having its roots in the Osirian narrative which poses Osiris as justified in his claims over Seth, Anthes (1954: 50) argues that there is no evidence of this in the Pyramid Texts. Instead he contends that the phrase and concept of *m3' ḫrw* "are applied to the deceased king when he is transfigured (and) they who praise him relate in fact that he is acclaimed as right . . . ." However, he cannot find a credible way to explain (and therefore does not) the Pyramid Text passage 1556a which clearly refers to the Osirian narrative and Osiris' vindication against Seth. The passage in question is "guilty is Seth, vindicated (literally right or just) is Osiris" (*'bš Stš m3' Wsir*).

The identification with Osiris, in fact the "becoming Osiris" as Morenz (1984:39) notes, is an integral part of the quest and process of becoming immortal. One assimilates spiritually the body, flesh, bones and notion of Osiris as Pyr. 192-193 states. And as Frankfort (1969:112-113) states, there is abundant concepts for this assimilation with Osiris, i.e., "as Osiris,' "with the aspect of Osiris," and "on the throne of Osiris." It should be noted here that the concept of judgment carries within it evidence of two traditions which eventually merged into one conceptual system--the celestial, focused on Ra and ascension, and the Osirian, focused on resurrection (Breasted, 1934: Chapters VI & VII; Griffiths, 1980).

In discussing the celestial tradition, Breasted (1934:74) notes that it too carries within it evidence of what is called "stellar" and "solar" beliefs in Egyptian society. "The solar beliefs predominate so strongly that the Pyramid Texts as a whole and in the form in which they have reached us may be said to be of solar origin," he states. Following this argument, the celestial conceptual system here refers essentially to the one focused on Ra and ascension. The celestial and ascension-focused concept of judgment, which is the oldest, evolves out of the priestly teaching of the sacred city of Heliopolis (*ʿInw*). Here the priests developed a spiritual doctrine which defined the royal ruler as son of Ra, in fact as a divine power on earth, the good god (*nṯr nfr*), imbuing him with the capacity for eternal life through righteousness. This immortality was expressed in life, joy and peace, being in and traversing the heavens with Ra himself, as an effective spirit (*3h*) or an imperishable star (*iḫm-sk*).

The resurrection-focused tradition focused on the paradigmatic life and death of Osiris, who was murdered and raised from the dead, and through this spiritual act suggested for humanity and each person the possibility and promise of resurrection and immortality. The classic concept for this is found in the Book of Vindication (CT IV: 168b-c) which says "*mt.i ʿnḫ.i ink Wsir*," (I shall die and I shall live, for I am Osiris." Thus, there is complete

identification between Osiris and the deceased as is shown in many passages of both the Book of Vindication and the Book of Coming Forth By Day in which the deceased assumes the name and title Osiris. Also, as we saw in the Great Hall of Maati, Ra and the Balance of Ra is present, but Osiris receives the report of the deceased in his vindication and the deceased himself from Horus. This represents the merger of the traditions into one and the absorption of the Osirian tradition into the celestial, conceptual system (Breasted, 1934:74).

But the core idea of immortality expressed in the earliest text of immortality through vindication in judgment remains. Therefore, it is taught, "Your name which is on earth lives. Your name which is on earth lasts. You will not disappear nor will you be destroyed in all eternity" (PT 764). For "There is given to you what is yours by Ra and your soul stands (forever) among the divine powers and glorified spirits (*3ḫw*) (PT 762-763). This ethical and spiritual concept of immortality through justification and judgment, then, appears in the Old Kingdom and also throughout Egyptian history in the Declarations of Virtue (Drioton, 1949; Spiegel, 1935; Yoyotte, 1961).

A second source of the ancient Egyptian concept of judgment is the Declarations of Virtue. The concept of judgment after death appears in a Fifth Dynasty inscription on the tomb of Hotephiryakhet, a priest of Abusir (Urk. I:

50.13-17, 51.1) In it he notes that he had "made this tomb as a just possession," that he had "not done violence to anyone," that he "was in honor with the king" and that he had "never taken a thing belonging to another." And he warns that anyone who does an evil thing to his tomb, "judgment shall be made on them for it by the Great God--*wnn wd' mdw ḥn'.sn ḥr.s in Nṯr '3.*" But he promises to intercede with God for one who makes immortality offerings for him at his tomb.

This concern for right behavior and judgment is expressed also in a similar manner in other Declarations of Virtue. The overseer of building, Nekhebu, (Urk. I:218.12-14) says that if anyone who violates his tomb:

> *iw(.i) wḏ' ḥn'.f in Nṯr '3*
> I will be judged with him by the
> Great god.

Likewise, Inti, the provincial governor (Urk. I:71.1-2) warns that if any persons violate his tomb:

> *wnn wḏ' mdw(.i) ḥn'.sn ḥr.s*
> *in Nṯr '3 Nb Wḏ' Mdw n*
> *n bw nt wḏ' mdw*
>
> I will be judged with them concerning it
> by the Great God, Lord of Judgment
> In the place of Judgment.

Both of these declarations and similar declarations of virtue stress that the authors have lived a Maatian life and thus point to the concept of standing well with God and the people as central to the idea of judgment.

This is expressed clearly in the declaration of virtue of Idw, overseer of the scribes (Urk. I:204.10). He says that he did Maat and spoke Maat and did not do evil because "he wanted to be one worthy before God and before the people, forever--*wnn im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr ḫr rmṯ nḥḥ*." Likewise, Sesi, overseer of works, (Urk. I:203.3) says that he did Maat and shunned isfet for he "desired that his name be good before God and before the people--*mr(.i) nfr rn (.i) ḫr Nṯr ḫr rmṯ*." Two things are of special note here. The first is that again the emphasis is on standing well before God and the people. And secondly, it is important that the word *rmṯ* (people) is most often written with both the determinative for man and woman, suggesting again the inclusiveness of the ethical imperative.

In terms of the concept of judgment, Sainte Fare Garnot (1938:49-50) notes that the semantic evolution of the verb *wḏ'* begins with its meaning to "cut" and then, perhaps later suggesting to "separate" the litigants or contenders. By the 6th Dynasty, it had come to mean to judge and became a part of the phrase, *wḏ' mdw* (the words are separated), i.e., a judgment has been rendered. Therefore, we see, as in the declaration of virtue of Inti above, the verb *wḏ' mdw* and the expressions *bw nt wḏ' mdw* (the place of judgment) and *nb wd' mdw* (the Lord of Judgment).

The concept of judgment and the concern for doing Maat appear in the Old Kingdom also in the Sebait of Ptahhotep,

a prime minister under King Isesi of the Fifth Dynasty (Zába, 1956). Here, as shown above, Ptahhotep stresses the value, durability and effectiveness of Maat. "Maat is great," he says, "its effectiveness is lasting and it has not been challenged or changed (disturbed) since the time of its Creator." He notes that "it is a (plain) path (even) before the unlearned and those who violate its laws are punished" (Ptahhotep, 88ff).

Moreover, Fecht (1958:24-25) argues that in Maxims 5 and 19 of the Sebait of Ptahhotep, there is a double meaning concerning punishment for the greedy (*'wn-ib*). On one hand there is the earthly punishment for those who transgress the laws of Maat in that "wrongdoing never brings its wares safely to port." But on the other hand, he contends, there is the suggestion of punishment after death which would in the end "make all earthly success meaningless." For the offender would not land on the other side. This, of course, answers the moral concern raised by Ptahhotep on the issue of evil's earthly success or literally "wickedness gaining wealth." The point is that even though evil seems to succeed, in the long run, it does not do so either in the earthly or otherworldly sense.

In the First Intermediate Period, in the Sebait of King Kheti of the Tenth Dynasty (c. 2150-2060 B.C.E.) for his son Merikara, there is the clearest description of the judgment (Golenischeff, 1916; Volten, 1945; Helck, 1977). He says:

> Make firm (*smnḫ*) your place in the West by being upright (*'ḳ3*) and doing justice (Maat) on which the hearts of the people rely. For more acceptable is the virtue (*bit*) of the righteous than the ox of the evildoer--*ir isft*. (Merikara, 128-129).

Kheti sets the context for a discussion of judgment by discussing the soul and its relatedness to the past and its resistance to magic and thus suggests its links to immortality. He says:

> The soul (ba) comes to the place it knows
> It does not overstep the ways of the past
> No magic can hold it back
> It will reach those who give it water.
> (Merikara, 52-53)

Then, he turns to the description of the judgment process in which one's deeds are placed beside her after death and she is judged accordingly. He says:

> As for the Tribunal which judges the needy
> You know they will not be lenient
> On the day of judging the miserable
> In the hour of doing their task
> Wretched is one who is accused who has
> knowledge
> Do not trust in the length of years
> They regard a life time as an hour
> A person survives after death
> And his deeds are set
> beside him as an allotment
> Existence there is for eternity
> It is a fool who does what they find
> fault with
> But as for one who reaches them without
> having done wrong
> He will exist there like a divine power
> Striding freely like the lords of eternity.
> (Merikara, 53-57)

Finally, Kheti reminds Merikara that each day and hour count toward the future, clearly in both a social and spiritual sense. He says,

iw r' w' di.f n nḥḥ
wnwt smnḫ.s n m-ḫnt
rh Nṯr irw n.f

One day is a donation to eternity.
(Even) an hour is a contribution to the future.
God knows who works for him. (66-67)

Kheti's discourse tells us several things about the Kemetic conception of judgment during this period. First, he notes that there is a day of judgment (*hrw wd'*) presided over by a Tribunal. Secondly, "a person survives after death and his deeds are set beside him." S/he is then judged by what s/he has done. Moreover, there is no leniency especially for those who knowingly do wrong. But for those judged righteous, they will exist in the afterlife "like a divine power, striding freely like the lords of eternity." Also, Kheti puts virtue above both ritual and magic in determining worthiness for the Otherworld. It is, he states, Maat-doing which determines one's acceptance by God in the Otherworld. And he makes the point that each day and hour is a contribution to one's future--both in this world and the next.

This is clearly a central text in defining the ground of immortality and the process of judgment. As Blumenthal (1980:35) states,

> "Der Einfluß der Ethik der Lehren auf das Konigtum äußert sich jedoch nicht nur in der Betonung des Weisheitideals, sondern auch in den Gedanken, daß man der Nachwelt am ehesten durch gute werke in Gedachtnis bleibt (P 31, 36-42, 141-142) und daß das Jenseitsschicksal vom Rechttun auf Erden abhängt (P 53-57, 127-129), die schon bei Ptahhotep ausgesprochen oder angedeuten sind."

It is also important to note, as she (1980:37) observes, that "The passage on the judgment of the dead (P 53-57) includes the important assertion that the King must submit to judgment after death . . ." and that "the King gains no advantages by his high office."

In the Middle Kingdom, the definitive text on Maat and immortality through righteousness is the Book of Khun-Anup or the Eloquent Peasant set in the reign of King Nebkaure Khety III (c. 2100 B.C.E.) (Vogelsang, 1964; Parkinson, 1991). Khun-Anup offers several passages in his discussion on justice which contributes to our understanding of the concept of judgment. For it is for him justice, and of course, Maat in the larger sense which is the ground of eternal life. In fact in his early presentation, he poses an important question in this regard to the High Steward, Rensi, when he asks, "Will you be a man of eternity--*in iw.k r s n nḥḥ*?" (B1, 95). Like other Kemetic moral texts, Khun-Anup poses the man of eternity as one who through doing Maat ensures a long life on earth and an eternal life in the hereafter.

Khun-Anup poses the question, "will you be a man of eternity?" in the context of challenging Rensi to do Maat. Thus, he tells him:

> Heed eternity's coming
> Desire to last. As it is
> said, Doing justice (Maat)
> is breath to the nose. (B1, 145-146)

Moreover, he tells him that

> Justice is for eternity
> It goes to the grave with
> the one who does it. (B1, 307-308)

Therefore, he says even though a person dies, "his name does not pass from the earth. He is remembered because of his goodness. That is the rule by God's command" (B1, 310-311). Finally, Khun-Anup tells Rensi that justice (Maat) is great, it endures, its value has been found; it leads one to reveredness (B1, 320-322). This last passage speaks to a concept, *im3ḫ* (reveredness, honor, worthiness) which we have discussed many times above and which is expressive of a status that has both social and spiritual dimensions. It thus reaffirms the link of the two and points again to the concept of judgment which is itself a social and spiritual concept.

Declarations of Virtue in the Middle Kingdom also contain concepts of judgment and the Afterlife. A DOV in the 12th Dynasty by the chamberlain, Semti the younger, offers such a model of Middle Kingdom conceptions of the hereafter and immortality through righteousness. He says:

> I put my name at the place where the divinity is, Osiris, First of the Westerners, lord of eternity, ruler of the West, (the place) to which all that exists flees, in order that I might be a spirit there in the midst of the followers of the lord of life; that I might eat his bread and <u>come forth by day</u>, that my soul might make mourning(?). O' people, be kind-hearted toward my monument and kind-handed to my memorial. For I have not done wrong. I have pleased God with Maat so that I might be therein ensouled, and

transfigured . . . ." (Sethe, 1928:75) (emphasis mine)

It is of value to note here that a favorable judgment by the Divine Tribunal presupposes a prior and equally favorable judgment by society. For any declaration of virtue or innocence is in the final analysis rooted in social practice and acceptance (Assmann, 1989:96).

It is in the New Kingdom that the ideals of judgment, justification and immortality achieve their fullest and most diverse expression. And again, it is the Book of Coming Forth By Day which is the central ethical text on judgment, justification and immortality. Literature in this regard which appears before it, prefigures and helps lay the basis for it, and literature after it reaffirms and expands on it. Thus, Coming Forth stands at a pivotal point for Maatian conceptions of the good and assessment and reward after life. In this conception, Maat is both the measure and meaning of right and of vindication in judgment and justification and therefore, the ground and promise of eternal life. This is clear in Chapter 125 of Coming Forth, but it is important to note that these concepts inform the spirit and context of the entire text.

In this text, in Chapter 125, the day of judgment is called "*hrw pwy ḥsb ḳdw*--the day of assessing characters" and "*hrw pwy ipt ꜥ3t*--the day of Great Reckoning." It is important to note that the emphasis on assessing character points toward the Maatian emphasis on virtue and character

as was expressed in both the Declarations of Virtue and the Sebait. This emphasis, of course, is reaffirmed in the Declarations of Innocence which represent, as noted above, a kind of summing up of major moral concerns in thought, emotion, speech and conduct and the quest for a divine judgment of righteousness and blamelessness.

Thus, at the outset in Chapter 1, the Osiris X (the deceased and risen one) claims a righteous and blameless life and asks of the divinities space, nourishment, respect, love, a clear path and open road, and welcome that "he may be a spirit with you" and that "no fault be found in him for the balance is void of wrongdoing by him."

In Chapter 15, the Osiris X says to Ra, "I have come to you . . . . I have caused Maat to ascend to its Maker, for I know you live by it." Again, in Chapter 144 Osiris X defines himself as "the one who has caused Maat to ascend to Ra." In Chapter 15B5 the Osiris X says, "O' Ra, as for me, (I) have done Maat, (I) have not wrong . . . may you cause me to be vindicated against (my) enemy." Moreover, Osiris X says that he too lives like Ra, i.e., by or on Maat. He says in Chapter 29A, "I live on Maat (I exist) thereby . . . . I have committed no hated offense against the divinities and thus, nothing shall be deducted by this from my vindication." In addition, in Chapter 185b Osiris X says:

> I have come unto thee Lord of the Sacred Land . . . . I was righteous while on earth, a doer of Maat, void of falsehood. May you grant me blessedness in heaven, power on earth and

vindication like that of the lords of the Otherworld. May my soul go forth to the Otherworld and walk in whatever place it wishes and I be like the divine ones in your following.

Repeatedly, there is throughout Coming Forth disclaimers of isfet and declarations of Maat-doing. Thus, the assertion is made by Osiris X that "I have not told lies yesterday and truth today" (Chapter 84), that she has "come to give Maat to Ra" (Chapter 96), that "I do Maat that I may go to Ra daily" (Chapter 94), and finally, that "I am a soul. I am as Ra . . . . Wrongdoing is my abomination. I will not look at it. I meditate on Maat, I live thereon."

Again, the quest is for immortality as a reward for the Maatian life. Thus, the text says, "to die again is your abomination. Eternity is yours as a lifetime, as a present, given as a reward" (CF, 109b). A key concept here is passage in peace--"*sw3 m ḥtp.*" Thus, a prayer offered to the Divine is:

di.k n.i w3t sw3 m ḥtp
ink mty m3'
n ḏd grg m rḫ.i
n ir(.i) sp 2

Let me pass in peace
For I am upright and just
I have not spoken lies knowingly
and I have not acted deceitfully.
(Chapter 15, Budge, 1898:39)

Or again, she says, "Make pleasant for me your ways. Make broad for me your paths that I may cross the earth in the (same) manner as (in) heaven, your light upon me" (Chapter 64). Passage reflects here as elsewhere, spiritual entrance

and mobility in the afterlife. Thus, metaphors of doors, gates, roads and paths figure prominently in the texts. In Chapter 127, Osiris X uses the door metaphor saying:

> O you doorkeepers who guard the doors, who consume the corpses of the dead, who pass by you when they are assigned to the house of destruction, who cause the soul of every virtuous, great and holy spirit to be led right to the place in the land of silence, even he who is a soul like Ra, who is praised and like Osiris who is praised, may you guide Osiris X, may you open the doors for him, may the earth open its caverns for him and may you make him vindicated against his opponents.

But regardless of the metaphor of entry and mobility used, the ground of justification and resultant immortality is Maat. Thus, declarations of Maat-doing and blamelessness from isfet are constant themes and claims. In this regard, in Chapter 181c, Osiris X says: "I have come to you lord of the sacred land, Osiris . . .who shall exist forever and ever. My heart is righteous, my hands are clean. I have come here to this city for I have done good on earth . . . ." And finally in Chapter 185, Osiris X says:

> May you let me be a follower of your majesty (in heaven) as I was on earth. When my soul is called, may it find you beside the lords of Maat. I come from a city of God, a district of the earliest time, being a soul, a spirit, a blessed one who is in this land.
> - - - - - - - -
> I come to you (my) hands bearing Maat, my heart has no lies in it. I place Maat before your face for you, knowing you live on it. (I) have done no wrongs in this land. (I) have not robbed a man of his possessions. I have come to you with Maat (truth) in my mouth and Maat in my hands. Maat is with me. Does not God know I have hated lying for you? (See Allen, 1984:202)

It is in this philosophical framework outlined above, then, that the spiritual and ethical meaning of the Book of Coming Forth By Day becomes evident. For coming forth is essentially a spiritual aspiration, for and practice of eternal life with the spiritual power and freedom to be and do whatever one wishes in whatever place one's spirit desires to be. Or as Naville (1906:165) states, coming forth "is to be delivered from that decreed and determined duration of time pertaining to every earthly life, and to have existence with neither beginning nor end, without limits in time and space." In a word, "it is to be delivered from these limits," rise like Ra and declare with power and permanent certainty born of righteousness that:

> Ra has received me unto himself, to heaven, to the eastern side of the heavens, as Horus (the Avenger of his father), as a dweller in the otherworld, as this star which lights up the sky. My sister is Sirius (my offspring is the morning star). Never again will the heavens be void of me or the earth be empty of my presence. (PT 362-363)

It is, in a word, to have lived in Maat, be judged and justified by Maat and then be rewarded the Maat of eternal life. For as it is written, "The heart of the wrongdoer is done away with, (so that) he shall not exist at all" (Chapter 182) but the gift of "Maat (is given) to one who comes bearing it" (Chapter 17).

These central concepts continue to inform Maatian ethics and spirituality throughout Kemetic history. Passing from the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts and Declarations of

Virtue, through spiritual and ethical texts of the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom, they reach their culmination in the Late Period. Thus, as Griffith (1991:217) points out, these central concepts of judgment, justification and immortality, represent a "continuity of . . .conviction through a long period of Egyptian spirituality and is well attested." Three examples definitive of texts containing these ideas are the papyrus of the Lady Tantudjare of the 21st Dynasty, the Setne II narrative of the period of Greek domination, and the Declaration of Virtue of the priest of Hermopolis, Petosiris, in the fourth century B.C.E.

In the papyrus of the Lady Tantudjare of the 21st Dynasty we read reaffirmation of commitment to Maat and the aspiration for honor by both history and heaven (Piankoff, 1957:138-149). She says, "I have come to you. My heart carries Maat, there is no evil in my belly." (Toward the close of their speech the (divine powers declare:)

> She will not be repulsed and her body (will) be stable on her, like those of the honored ones of her city. Her mouth is sound, her body complete like those of Heliopolis. She is praised before this God as she was upon earth, having lived long (to) a pleasant old age, without blemish in her city. She has built a tower,she has filled the granaries, she has caused the young to be numerous, she has filled the treasury with silver and gold, with linen, as well as with stuffs. She followed her Lady Mut of Asheru, being safe from fear.

The Setne II narrative, or more specifically its first part is a narrative of Setne Khamwas' visit to the hereafter guided by his son, Si-Osire (Griffiths, 1900:41-50; AEL III,

138-141). Here he sees the good life of the righteous who has been rewarded for their Maatian practice. And he also sees the tribulations of the wrongdoers who receive horrible and ongoing punishment. The basic theme is that of the poor and righteous person being rewarded in the afterlife and the rich and evil man being punished, a theme which appears to have "formed the basis for the parable of Jesus in Luke (16, 19-31) and for related Jewish legends preserved in many variants in Talmudic and medieval Jewish sources" (Lichtheim, 1980:126).

Si-Osire tells his father that the judgment is held in the next world and good deeds are weighed against misdeeds one has done on earth. And when good deeds outweigh bad deeds one is rewarded with eternal life. But if the reverse is true, then, one is punished. In a word, Si-Osire tells his father, Setne,

> He who is beneficent on earth to him, one is beneficent in the (Otherworld). And he who is evil to him, one is evil. It is so decreed [and will remain so] forever. (AEL III:141)

Thus, again the concept of judgment, justification and immortality are reaffirmed.

And finally, we have the <u>Virtues</u> of Petosiris, high priest of Djehuti, at the beginning of the third century B.C.E. under the kings of the Thirtieth Dynasty. He says, recalling some of the earliest Declarations of Virtues, that he was a worthy citizen, showed filial piety, was serviceable to the vulnerable and built for eternity that he might

live for eternity. His declarations of virtue are clearly placed within the context of his understanding of judgment which he describes as an inevitable, impartial and inclusive process. He says:

> Amenta (The West, paradise) is the abode of
> one who is faultless.
> Praise God for one who has reached it
> No one will reach it unless his heart is
> upright in doing Maat
> The poor are not distinguished from the
> rich there
> Only one who is found free of fault
> By the scale and weight before the Lord
> of eternity (is distinguished)
> No one is exempt from the assessment
> Djehuti . . .in charge of the scale
> Will assess each person according to his
> deeds on earth. (Lefebvre, 1923:no.81.
> 16-22)

Especially noteworthy is the stress on the impartiality of the judgment, which recognizes neither rich nor poor, only the righteous (*m3'ty*) who practice Maat.

Petosiris' father Sishu also speaks of judgment (Lefebvre, 1923:no. 116.4-6). He says he has reached the city of eternity "having done good (*bw nfr*) on earth. Having "filled (his) heart with the way of God" since his youth, he did the will of God in his life. To wit, he says: "I did Maat and hated falsehood for I know he lives by it (Maat) and is satisfied with it." He concludes saying his fellow citizens praised God for him and that:

> I did this for I remembered I would reach
> God after death
> And I was conscious of the day of the Lords
> of Maat
> When they purge in judgment
> One praises God for one who loves God

He will reach his grave without grief.
(116.6)

The Kemetic consciousness of and concern for judgment and the promise of immortality, then, are clear in this and other texts. One links Maat-doing with immortality and believes that a life of Maat in this world is a promise, even guarantee of a good life in the next world. For as Khun-Anup states, "Maat is for eternity. It goes to the grave with one who does it" (B1 307-308).

It is this understanding of judgment, justification and immortality that stands at the center of Maatian theology and in turn informs and inspires the Maatian ethical project. Joined to this theological understanding in shaping the Maatian ethical project are an ontology and anthropology of possibility which also undergird and inform Maatian ethical practice. We will address first the ontology and then the anthropology in our effort to delineate and explicate the fundamental philosophical pillars of the Maatian moral vision and the Maatian practice it anticipates and informs.

Translation Notes for the Declarations

1. I have added "to be able" (to say), because, as I have argued, this is a statement of ethical and spiritual aspiration rather than "magic," as many Egyptologists argue.

2. Maati here means both the Two Truths and the "really true" Truth. For "i" on Maat can be the dual or an augmentative, i.e., an indicator of expansion and/or stress. Two Truths may represent the dual character of reality, spiritual, physical and the dualities of life-good, evil, high, low, strong, weak, etc.

3. I have added "without fear" to further clarify the sense of the statement.

4. "Consume their blood" seems to be a way of saying "drain them of life," in a word, destroy them.

5. Wennofer is Osiris, Lord of the Departed. The name literally means the "Good Being" or "Good One."

6. Wendjut literally means "familiars" and thus "associates, family members, friends, etc."

7. The phrase *"m st m3't"* can also mean "In the place of righteousness" or in court, i.e., seat of justice.

8. That which does not exist is that beyond the realm of the real and ordered. It is chaos beyond the boundaries of the ordered world (Hornung, 1982:172ff).

9. An alternative rendering is "My name has not reached the pilot of the Divine Bark."

10. This is literally an "aroura" (*st3t*) about two-thirds of an acre. I used acre as a basic and familiar unit in English.

11. On is also called Heliopolis.

12. This sentence is phrased so as to set the context for the declaration which follows.

13. Ta-Meri--The Beloved Land is another name for Egypt or Kemet.

14. Actually, the sentence literally reads, "I have come here to set the scales (of Maat) in their proper place in the land of the silent, which means the land of the departed and refers to the judgment process. However, one can translate it, as does Allen (1974:99), as "set the scales in their proper place among the silent ones." It then symbolically can be used to suggest the living and dead who have no voice. I have chosen the latter symbolic interpretation.

V

MAATIAN ONTOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Cua (1988:292) argues that one of the main tasks of moral theory is critical attention to <u>moral metaphysics</u>. Comparing this concept to Kant's (1959:7) "metaphysics" of morals which "is meant to investigate the ideas and principles of pure will," he suggests a task of investigating the metaphysical presuppositions of a moral tradition. He thus defines moral metaphysics as "an inquiry into the underlying conception of a moral tradition in terms of its worldview or vision of the relation between the world of human affairs and the natural order." For Confucianism, <u>Tao</u> is that conceptual focus for such an inquiry (Hall and Ames, 1987: 226ff). In the Maatian tradition, Maat is such a point of orientation both for ethics and ontology of the tradition. In fact, it is the ground of their interrelatedness. This chapter, then, will offer a critical discussion of Maatian ontology and its interrelatedness to Maatian ethics,

especially in terms of its serving as the locus of metaphysical presumptions which undergird and inform the Maatian ethical tradition.

Maat is first of all an ontological concept but its ethical implications loom just as large on the ancient Egyptian intellectual horizon. In fact, its ontological and ethical meaning are interrelated and must be studied as such. Indeed, central to the understanding of the ground of ethics and related critical questions is the comprehension of their ontological foundations. As Paul Tillich (1972:72) has argued, "the roots of the moral imperative, the criteria of its validity, the sources of its content, the forces of its realization, all this can be elaborated only in terms of an analysis of man's being and universal being." In a word, "the answer to each of these questions is directly or indirectly dependent on a doctrine of being." However, it is important to note that analytical reflection on the ethical significance of Maatian ontology in no way suggests an equation of ethics and ontology, although Maatian ethics, as other ethics, does have to do with being, i.e., the nature of being and how the conception of being undergirds and informs ethical thought and practice.

The essential concern here, then, is not with equating ethics and ontology or simply defining qualities of being, but rather demonstrating the moral significance of these qualities in the ethical thought and practice of the ancient

Egyptians. For in the final analysis, the ancient Egyptians' fundamental, even prior, ethical concern is not ontological but experiential and practical, i.e., concern with defining and living the good life, of being a worthy member of family and community and of creating and sustaining the just and good, i.e., Maatian, society. Nevertheless, given the centrality of Maat in both ancient Egyptian ontology and ethics and the interrelatedness of the two, a substantive treatment of Maatian ontology in terms of its moral significance is essential to delineating and understanding Maatian ethics. Our focus here, then, is on the fundamental ontological assumptions upon which the ancient Egyptians grounded their ethics, the assumptions about the nature of existence, of the universe, of God and of humans, the latter of which I will deal with in the next chapter on Maatian anthropology. For at the heart of both these assumptions and the ethics which evolve from them is the ontological principle of Maat.

A discussion of this subject of necessity begins with ancient Egyptian cosmogony and cosmology which are found especially in the creation narratives and offer several basic motifs of both ontological and moral significance (Lesko, 1991; Allen et al, 1989; Wilson, 1948a). Certainly, among the most important Kemetic works on this subject are: The Pyramid Texts (Sethe, 1908-1922); The Coffin Texts (de Buck, 1935-1961); The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind, (Book of Knowing the Creations) (Faulkner, 1933); The Shabaka Text

(BM 498; Breasted, 1901; Junker, 1940; Iverson, 1990); The Book of Gates (Hornung, 1979-1980); the Books of the Otherworld (Hornung, 1972, 1965); the Book of Coming Forth By Day (Budge, 1898; Naville, 1971); and an expansive corpus of sacred hymns (Assmann, 1975, 1983a, 1969; Barucq, 1962; Hassan, 1930; Gardiner, 1905). Within this literature, there are several basic motifs which provide the outlines of an ontology which in turn undergirds and informs the Maatian ethical and religious tradition. Among these are: (1) the potentiality and power of being; (2) the orderedness of being; (3) the continuity of being; (4) the essential goodness of being; and (5) the eternalness of being. It is these themes then which we will treat in the reconstruction and explication of Maatian ontology in this chapter.

Some of the most definitive and useful works on the philosophy of Kemetic creation narratives which aid this project are: James Allen's Genesis in Egypt (1988); Mubabinge Bilolo's Le Createur et la creation dans la pensée memphite et amarnienne (1988) and Les cosmo-theologies philosophique d'Heliopolis et d'Hermopolis (1986); and Théophile Obenga's African Philosophy of the Pharaonic Period (1989) and La Philosophie Africaine de la Periode Pharonique, 2780-330 avante notre ère (1990). My interest in Bilolo's and Obenga's work is not only in their insightful interpretations but also their instructive drawing of parallels between Kemetic concepts and similar concepts in

other African societies. My interest in Allen is also in his interpretations which offer both grounds on which to dialog and on which to contend. Moreover, I am especially interested in his thrust to explain the relationship between the narrative of creation and its infusion into the concreteness of everyday existence. In focusing on Coffin Text 80, Allen (1988:25) notes that "the primary theme of CT 80 . . .is not the creation of (the) physical elements of the world, but rather the relationship between their creation and the make up of the world as it now exists--the theme of creation extended into the world of everyday existence." It is this extension of the contentions of this cosmogony and cosmology into the "world of everyday existence" that we will pursue. For it is these contentions which provide an ontology central to the religious and ethical views of the ancient Egyptians.

5.2 The Potentiality and Power of Being

5.2.1 Creative Becoming

The first basic motif of Maatian ontology is the potentiality and power of being. At the time of creation, God, the Creative Force, exists as an inactive circle (*dbn*) or seed of spiritual matter-energy, immersed and floating in and one with the infinity of precreation. It is an ontological situation characterized by four basic aspects: darkness (*kkw*), fluidity (*nw, ḥḥw*), invisibility (*imnw*) and unboundedness (*tnmw*). The Creator, in his name Atum, is

"floating" in the waters without movement during precreation (CT VI:344). This condition is further defined as one of *nnw*--inertness and the aloneness of the Creator. Thus, he describes it as a time when "I was alone with the waters, in inertness" (CT I:28). The process of creation, as the texts (CT 76) show, leads to transformation of darkness into light, i.e., sending forth light and "giving brilliance to darkness;" fluidity into concreteness, producing the vault of heaven and what is in it as well as earth; invisibility, then, into visible forms and unboundedness into boundedness through Maat, the very embodiment of order. Thus the Creator in his name of Atum says, "I am the begetter of repeated millions out of Flood, out of Waters, out of Darkness and out of Unboundedness" (CT II:5-6).

It is these precreation elements, containing both male and female dimensions which are called the Ḫmnw, the Primordial Eight or Ogdoad in the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom. In the New Kingdom, the theologians of Hermopolis developed a more expansive creation discourse, incorporating and building on these four concepts (Sethe, 1929:35ff). They also incorporated the concept of *Imnw*, invisibility, as one of the four pairs of premordial divinities and conditions of precreation, omitting *tnmw*--unboundedness (Sethe, 1929:64-65). Following this, I have, in this discussion, used *imn* or invisibility as one of the precreation conditions and have collapsed "flood" and "waters" into the

concept of fluidity. This is done to stress the potentiality of movement in a condition of fluidity or more precisely, liquidity. For the primordial ocean of precreation does not flow; it is simply inert, yet pregnant, with the possibility of "repeated millions" of happenings. The ontological and contextual situation here, then, can be defined, maintaining the ancient Egyptian metaphor as an <u>ocean of possibilities</u>. Moreover, these precreation elements are at the same time powers, principles and "material" out of which the world is made. But again, all is simply potentiality, an infinite ocean of possibilities. And it is in such a situation that the Creator first conceptualizes and then actualizes himself in and as the world (Grapow, 1931).

Obenga (1989:297-298) notes that "the beginning of all beginnings is <u>Nun</u>, the absolute waters which contain the seeds of creative power, the ocean anterior to every manifestation of life and movement; the 'prior world' which holds within it already matter; the 'chaotic' milieu of forms-in waiting; the pre-temporal, untermed form of the Creator-God." This fundamental concept of the centrality of water and its creative potentiality, he asserts, is pervasive in Africa, including such societies as Dogon, Bambara, Akan, Venda, etc. (Obenga, 1990:39-41). Thus, he (1989:299) states that "From Pharaonic Egypt up to the present day, Black African thought has explained the origins of existence

through the concept of primeval waters." And what is key to these various African concepts of the centrality of water to creation is the metaphor it offers of a context of possibility, of fluidity and promise, in a word, as Obenga notes, "a milieux of forms-in waiting." Thus, one has here a conception of possibility inherent in existence itself, in its very structure and functioning. The moral implications of this lie both in the optimism this supports and the dynamic character of life it suggests and requires. For this inherent potentiality of being is open to the human person for both development and transcendence (Finnestad, 1986).

Another metaphor of potentiality is the Creator's self-description in CT 714 as a "circle (seed) in his egg." This Kemetic conception of the Creator parallels the Dogon conception of Amma, the Creator who, in one conception, is the egg of the universe (Karenga, 1989: 164-165; Griaule, 1978; Griaule and Dieterlen, 1965). For in Dogon cosmogony "Amma was the egg of the universe and the universe and Amma were one." And "as egg Amma symbolized and was fertility and unlimited creative possibility" (Karenga, 1989:164-165). Moreover, in Dogon cosmogony "in the beginning everything that would be already potentially was. The substance and structure of the universe was in Amma, the Supreme God, who was in the image of an egg and divided into four quarters containing the four basic elements of air, earth, fire and water and four cardinal directions--north, south, east and

west." Through creative thought, speech and effective action Amma, traced within himself the design and developmental course of the universe, using 266 cosmic signs which contained the essence, structure and life-principle of all things.

Below we shall see how creative thought (Sia) and authoritative utterance (Ḥu) also play a similar role in the ancient Egyptian concept of creation. This conceptual image of egg as a field and ground of potentiality is also found in other African societies such as the Bambara, Fali and the Aboure. For Obenga (1989:300-301), this cosmic egg in Kemet and other African societies "is the morning of the world being born, becoming." In other words, "The egg expresses here, the idea of wholeness, of perfection, of integrity, purity, of youth and life." And this egg as potentiality "points to the future, the world it will bring to life." The central thrust here is, again, to posit the field and ground of possibility, potentiality and the concept of egg and ocean offer fertile conceptual images (Obenga, 1990:43-45).

Inherent in this egg and ocean of possibilities, then, are all the elements necessary for creation, but it is the Creator who in developing himself, brings being, as an active process of development (*ḫpr*), into being. In the Book of Knowing the Creation, the Creator says, "I came into being as the Bringer into being. When I came into being,

being (itself) came into being. All being came into being after I came into being" (Bremner-Rhind Papyrus 26, 21ff; 28, 20ff). This posits being as an active process as opposed to inert existence which characterized precreation. Allen (1988:29) states that although "ḫpr" is "often translated 'come into being,' the actual Egyptian sense is closer to meaning 'change, develop, evolve'." Such a developmental process, he continues, may be "sequential or a series of alternatives" and "implies an ending state different from that which existed before the process began." Thus, Allen (1988:28) translates the above quoted passage as "When I developed (*ḫpr*) development developed. All development developed after I developed."

Whereas I agree with Allen that *ḫpr* can and does mean change, develop, evolve, I have not used this meaning for the translations and conceptual discourse. As with all multiple-meaning words, what is key here is context. And in this context I prefer the category 'being' to indicate the ontological and to develop the point of be-ing as an active ontological process (*ḫpr*) rather than an inert or general state of existence (*wnn*). For inherent in the ancient Egyptian conception of being is the notion of activity which in turn suggests life, life as biology as well as energy and movement (Finnestad, 1989b). The kind of be-ing I emphasized here is best described as 'becoming,' another of the multiple meanings of *ḫpr*. Once set in motion the universe

and all that exists is in a constant and eternal process of becoming. And it is this category of becoming that is at the heart of the concept of the potentiality of being and is key to understanding its ethical significance.

The Creator becomes active and in his becoming active, he subtracts the primeval waters from himself. This begins a process of differentiation central to creation. Thus, creation is not construction out of nothingness but differentiating and ordering that which exists and making it active. The Creator brings himself into being as a self-developing God (*Ntr ḫpr ḏs.f*) through mind, will, speech and effective action. Thus, He says:

> It was through my effectiveness, that I brought about my body. I am the one who made me. It was as I wished (willed), according to my mind-heart (ib) that I constructed myself. (CT 714)

Finnestad (1986:362) suggests that *ḫpr* and *ḫprw* are categories indicating change "from latent to manifest life-potential being is transformed into realized being." He understands this conception of self-transformation and self-transcendence as open to the human person in spiritual forms as ka, ba and akh. But since, as he says, all of these categories denote the human person as a living being and "that which transcends is man's life," an extension of this concept to the ethical and social realm is both possible and necessary. The divine, therefore, becomes for humans an image of possibility and a model to emulate as argued here and below in Chapter VI, Maatian anthropology.

It is through will, mind/heart and effectiveness that the Creator creates himself. And it is this ontological model that informs the ethical and indeed ontological understanding of human possibility. As the ethical texts repeatedly state, "I made my character"--in a word, I made myself into what I am. This is a clear affirmation of human agency informed by theological conceptions of creation and the inherent potentiality of being. Furthermore, the Creator says, "I made everything I wished in this land (*irry.i mrwt.i nbt m t3 pn*) and I expanded out in it (*wsḫ.n.i im.f*). Here, then, is a question of mind/heart conceiving, willing and bringing into being. Moreover, the creation process is defined as one in which bringing oneself into being brings other things into being, one in which one expands in the world in the process of becoming. It is, thus, a concept of self-creation which is at the same time world creation, i.e., creating the world we live in and will. And the fundamental ground for this process is Maat as we have seen and will return to frequently.

It is important to note here that the creation unfolds and is expressed in metaphors of biology more than physics. Thus, in various texts, the Creator brings into being the male and female principles, his offspring, through exhaling, i.e., sneezing, spitting and orgasm. The other divine powers and principles (*nṯrw*) are given birth and the primordial divine powers are posed as mothers and fathers

who create light (*ḳm3 šw*). Ra (Atum, God) is an egg or seed which is fertile with possibilities of growth and development and creation begins with a "dialog" between God and the waters in which he exists. This metaphorical mode of knowing and of explaining the origin of things is seen by many Egyptologists as simply a reflection of the "mythopoeic character" of ancient Egyptian thought. But seen another way, it reflects the perception of the universe or cosmos as an organismic process rather than a mechanical one. It is here that Allen's emphasis on *ḫpr* as "growth and development" is most insightful and instructive. For again the universe is alive with the activity and promise of becoming.

As Allen (1988:24) states, "the process of creation begins as a 'dialog' between non-existence and potentiality (the Singular God)." The text (CT 80) says of this dialog:

> Then Atum (the Creator) said to the waters: I am floating, and very weary, and the original ones are inert. It is my son Life who will lift up my heart, that will animate my heart when he has gathered together these weary members of mine. (CT I:34-35)

Here the principle of life is said to be the son of the Creator who will lift up and nourish the Creator's heart/mind. This is an interesting conception, for it reaffirms in a metaphorical way that the Creator produces the life principle that lifts and animates him. Thus, he is the source of life that makes him live, that gathers his parts into the oneness that he becomes. Again, the anthropologi-

cal significance of this is the reaffirmation of agency, the capacity for self-construction.

The text continues stressing the centrality of Maat to existence and life. It says:

> The waters said to Atum
> Kiss your daughter Maat
> Place her at your nose
> And your heart will live
> For she is not far from you.
> Maat is your daughter
> With your son Shu whose name is life
> It is of your daughter Maat you shall eat
> It is your son Shu who will lift you up.
> (CT I:35)

In this passage, Shu remains life, but Maat is posed as the essence of life, indeed, the ground of life. Thus, the concept of eating, absorbing or assimilating (*wnm*) Maat is introduced. Here, it is introduced as a practice of and necessity for God. For Maat is that by which God lives and is satisfied. Therefore, Maat must be constantly offered to God, a practice which is both spiritual and ethical.

In the ethical texts, the offering of Maat to God is both an ethical obligation and an ontological practice. For it reaffirms and reinforces Maat in the world, over and against isfet and thus, reinforces existence, good, stability, harmony and other positive features of being (Hornung, 1988; Moret, 1988; Teeter, 1990). In this process of offering Maat both as ritual and ethical practice, one participates in a cosmic process and thus is linked to the ongoing project of the maintenance and development of the world. As

Tobin (1989: 80) notes, to the ancient Egyptians, "Maat was thus more than only the principle of universal order; it was an integral part, an inseparable aspect of the cosmos, without which the cosmos would not have even existed." Doing Maat, then, points toward locating and understanding oneself in the context of the larger whole and this has great significance for both social and environmental ethics. For to be a participant in such a context and process is an ongoing challenge to determine and maintain right relationships in the various spheres of activity and interaction which constitute the realm of being and becoming.

Central, also, then, to the creative process and its ethical emulation is establishing place (*st*). In the Creator's account of his creation, he states in CT 80 that he was alone in the unboundedness (*tnmw*) of precreation infinity and "could not find a place in or on which I could sit or stand." This happens:

> before (the sacred city of) On had been founded that I might dwell in it, before the Lotus had been tied that I might sit on it, before I made Heaven (Nut) so she could be over my head and Earth (Geb) could marry her . . . . (CT I:33-34)

Finding no place on which to stand or sit, He becomes a mound <u>in</u> and <u>for</u> himself, having surveyed in his heart the situation and the possibilities inherent in it. And it is from this primordial mound, this location <u>in</u> and <u>of</u> himself that the Creator designed and brought into being the whole universe.

Thus, the Creator, in his name of Ptah, is called the <u>placemaker</u> in one of his many praise poems, "The Hymn to Ptah," (Wolf, 1929). The text says:

> *inḏ ḥr.k ẖft P3wt.k*
> *ir.n.i m-ẖt ḫpr.n.i m Nṯr*
> *ḥ'w ḳd ḥ'w.f ds.f*
> *nn ḫpr pt nn ḫpr t3*
> *nn bs nwy*
> *dmḏ.n.k iwf.k ip.n.i 't.k*
> *gm.n.k tw w' ir st.f*
> *Nṯr nb T3wy*
> \- - - - - - - -
> *ẖnm.i ds.k*
> *spd pr spd*
> *'ḥ'.n.k ḥr t3 m nnw.f*
> *s3ḳ.n.f rf m-ẖt*
> *iw.k m irw n T3tnn* (Wolf, 1929:23.3-18)

> Hail to you before your primordial ones
> You created after you came into being as God
> the Body who built his body himself
> Before heaven came into being, before earth
> came into being
> Before the waters were introduced
> You tied together the world
> You brought together your flesh; you
> considered your parts
> You found yourself alone. <u>Placemaker</u>.
> God who fashioned the Two Lands.
> You joined together yourself
> Active one who came forth active
> You stood up on the land in its
> inertness and
> And it pulled itself together afterwards
> Your being in the form of Tatenen.
> (italics mine)

This text contains a rich array of images of self-agency. The Creator in his name of Ptah is a place-maker--*ir st.f*--who of necessity is an "active one who came forth active." The word "*spd*" allows for a range of meanings. Faulkner (1981:223-224) lists as two of these, "alertness" and "effective." Thus, Allen's (1988:40) translation of it

as "active" is an excellent choice which combines, in context, both "alertness" in opposition to "inertness" and "effectiveness" in thought and practice. Also, the Creator as in other creation narratives creates the world out of his own "body," distinguishing parts of him for diversity and joining together in continuity.

This place-making aspect of Ptah, the Creator is reflected also in his depiction as "being in the form of Ta-tenen." Ta-tenen is a *nṯr* or divine power who first appears in the literature of the Middle Kingdom (Schlögl, 1980). His name which translates as "Land that becomes increasingly distinct" refers to the primeval mound on which the Creator stood to carry out the process of creation. He is associated with Ptah in the time of Ramesses II. The point here, again, is that the Creator in the form of Ta-tenen is his own mound, for he is the land that becomes increasingly distinct and thus is his own grounding. It is an important ontological principle of creation, that the Creator is internally grounded so that when he stood up, the land drew together or formed a mound.

This concept of internal grounding in creation expresses itself ethically as Maatian grounding and agency. For as the moral self-presentation in the chapters above demonstrate, it is one's Maat, one's character, one's virtue, one's heart which goes on to do good, brings honor, causes one to speak truth and do justice. In a word, it is one's

internal grounding that causes one to become what one ought to be.

This place-making, or locating and grounding oneself, then, is key to Maatian ethics. For as the moral self-presentations above in Chapter II and III show, this was a continuing concern for the ancient Egyptian. One always acts ethically in a given context, one is worthy in one's family, town,city or district. One speaks truth there, does justice there and walks in the way of righteousness there. Thus, one is socially and morally grounded there. Location is also another way to discuss the ethical tradition itself, for one is always concerned about following in the footsteps of the ancestors, i.e., honoring the tradition. Place-making, then, is both a creative and ethical concept and poses the ongoing challenge to ground oneself and in that context, on that 'primordial mound' to act morally and creatively.

Furthermore, the Hymn to Ptah defines the Creator as: "active one who came forth active." It goes on to say that: "When you stood up on the land in its inertness, it drew together thereafter, you being in the form of Ta-tenen." This reference contains two concepts basic to Maatian ethics: 1) actively standing up, and 2) being internally grounded. The Creator comes forth active, stands up on the land in its inertness, and in doing so causes the land to draw together. Here the centrality of concrete practice, of

standing up and acting is affirmed. Standing up, then, becomes both in the mortuary and ethical literature a paradigm of spiritual and ethical behavior. To stand up like Ptah or like Horus in Coming Forth, then, is a fundamental way of coming to life and being active.

Ethically speaking, standing up and being active means being creative in word and in deed, bringing good into the world and lessening evil (Khun-Anup, B1, 241ff). Modern Maatian ethics, building on the ethical teachings of Malcolm X, finds in his ethical formula of right-doing, "Wake up, clean up and stand up" a fruitful extension of the original Maatian concept (X, 1965; Karenga, 1994). Malcolm's three-pronged ethical imperative is one of: coming-to-consciousness, morally grounding oneself and then engaging in moral practice to bring good and lessen evil in the world. It thus recalls the Creator's prise de conscience, his grounding himself in Maat and his standing up to create a universe based on Maat.

The ontological and ethical dimensions of the process are thus intertwined for, as Khun-Anup says, doing Maat is not only doing good, it is increasing good and lessening evil in the world. Therefore, he (B1, 241-242) says, "One who lessens falsehood brings (*sḫpr*) Maat into being. And one who brings good (*bw nfr*) into being destroys (*sḥtm*) evil." The verb *sḫpr* can be translated as create and thus the passage can read "One who diminishes evil creates Maat

and one who creates good destroys evil." The point is that good is created and evil lessened and/or destroyed when one stands up and does Maat.

5.2.2 The Self-Affirmation of Life

The ethical import of the potentiality of being in Maatian ontology is also expressed in the power of being over non-being and self-affirmation over self-negation. For the Creator as the source and substance of all being overcomes non-being, i.e., inactivity, obscurity and indefiniteness and establishes life in the context of order. That which exists in life overcomes that which does not exist, i.e., the inert and obscure, indefiniteness of precreation. Inherent in this metaphor of creation is the concept of the potentiality of being expressing itself by projecting its power in life. Life in Maatian ontology is the key dynamic of being; it is being actualizing itself, through the power of self-assertion against non-being.

In Maatian theology and ethics, non-being poses a dual challenge. It is at once a threat and a ground for creative activity (Hornung, 1982:180). As a threat to creation, non-being or the non-existent is the disordered, the evil, the impure, the unjust and all those things negative to being, especially being as life. Thus, the ethical imperative is to constantly overcome non-being by creating, recreating, sustaining and restoring rightness and righteousness, i.e., Maat which is the essence and energy of life. Thus one is

challenged to be and act like Ra (*ir mi R'*), to speak Maat and do Maat (*d̲d m3't, ir m3't*). For Maat is life and life is being actualizing itself in a dynamic and eternal process.

This ontological and ethical importance of Maat as a life-giving and life-sustaining principle and substance is reaffirmed in the ethical texts of ancient Egypt as well as in other kinds of texts which contain ethical and spiritual passages. Therefore, Khun-Anup says, "Doing Maat is breath to the nose," (*t̲3w pw n fnd̲ irt M3't*) (Khun-Anup, B1, 146), recalling the Creator's act of placing Maat to his nose to enliven himself and begin the creative process as mentioned above. Moreover, the dialog between the Creator and the primeval waters (Nu) in which the Creator as Atum is told to "eat" of his daughter Maat and live (CT 80:62) is also reaffirmed in other texts as an ethical act and spiritual ritual of offering Maat to Ra, God, that he may live and rejoice. The word *wnm* (eat) is again a metaphorical mode of describing assimilation or absorption and signifies the spiritual assimilation of Maat as a life-generating and life-sustaining spiritual substance (Anthes, 1952). Thus, Hatshepsut says, "I have offered Maat which he (Ra) loves. I know that he lives by it. It is my bread and I drink of its dew. I am a likeness from his limbs, one with him" (Urk. IV:384.15-385.3).

Maat here represents the ontological unity of God and humans. It is posed not as an actual material substance, but as an ethical and spiritual one and the offering of Maat as a ritual is a reaffirmation of having offered Maat in daily life as ethical practice as stated above. Both the spiritual ritual and the ethical act are translated in Maatian spirituality as nourishment, a spiritual food for the continued life and good of the divine, social and natural. In a word, the ethical act becomes a spiritual and ontological one which, as the Maat which gives life, reaffirms being over and against non-being, order over and against disorder, and all things good and pure (*ḫt nbt nfrt w'bt*) over and against all things evil and impure. Therefore, again the life process is central to being, dynamic and eternal and Maat stands at the heart and center of this ongoing and eternal becoming or actualization of being (*ḫpr*).

Allen (1988:25ff) recognizes this, and his contention that life is the change aspect of reality or being in Egyptian cosmology and ontology is a correct one. It is this fact that serves as a theoretical basis for understanding Maat as an active principle as well as one of order--maintenance. The key concept here is *ḫpr* or "kheper" which is best translated here, as noted above, as becoming. Thus, I do not agree with Allen that development is circular and that *nḥḥ* is best translated as eternal recurrence and *ḏt* as eternal sameness. Actually, "*nḥḥ*" is best translated as

eternity, everlastingness, and similar synonyms for infinity of time. And ḏt is essentially a synonym of *nḥḥ*. The category *ḫpr* or becoming in Kemetic ontology does not suggest recurrence or eternal sameness. In fact, becoming is a category of eternal unfolding and has ethical implications for concepts of human development and flourishing. It is, in a word, a category of the potentiality of being, of perpetual creative transformation into a myriad of things like Ra. In fact Allen (1988:29) suggests such an interpretation with his notation referring to Wörterbuch (III:266,14) that "*iri ḫprw*, 'make developments,' . . . .is the Egyptian idiom for 'grow up,' i.e., with reference to various stages of development that a human being goes through in life, from baby to adult." Moreover, this is the phrase used also to define spiritual transformation after resurrection.

But Allen does not follow this line of development and instead chooses to pursue the position that change in the Kemetic worldview is a cyclical concept of "eternal recurrence" and "eternal sameness." Allen (1988:26) does say that "Yet within this unchanging and ordered construct there are also dynamic forces at work." But he goes on to say "although things in the world change, they do so as part of a cyclical pattern that is always the same . . . .This apparently paradoxical union of immutability and change is expressed in the Egyptian concept of Eternal Recurrence." He thus ends up where he begins, for even his change is

sameness, i.e., "eternal recurrence" not development, i.e., an unfolding, bringing the latent into activity or reality, as he translates *ḫpr* in other instances. There is obviously a common sense assumption within even modern cultures as well as in Kemet that things tend to repeat. Therefore, I am not questioning the presence of such a philosophical orientation in Kemet. What I question is whether or not this precludes or diminishes an equal orientation concerning growth and difference. And I am also questioning the relative accuracy of translating *ḏt* as "eternal sameness" and *nhh* as "eternal recurrence" and whether such translations do not severely diminish the Kemetic conceptual balance between order and change which Allen suggests.

Secondly, the ontological situation of non-being itself is not simply a threat to being, but also a challenge to overcome it. Thus, for the Creator the ontological situation of precreation as inertness, obscurity and indefiniteness becomes a field of creative action. For potentiality is in the very structure and substance of existence. Even inertness is liquid, watery, full of possible developments. And darkness, as Allen states (1988:34-35), "is not so much the antagonist of light as its unrealized potential." That is to say, "darkness is light waiting to happen." Likewise, unboundedness (*tnmw*) is not so much "chaos" as unstructured and unrealized possibilities of creation. What is needed in such an ontological situation in order to turn it into a

field for creative action is a Creator, who has a determined and purposeful heart-mind (*ib*) or will, exceptional insight (*ḥu*), authoritative utterance (sia) and effective action (akḫw). As it was for the Creator at creation, so it is with the creative person in daily life. For whether at creation or in daily life, it is through these categories of be-ing and becoming that Maat is established and sustained. And Maat as both an ontological and ethical category of potentiality and power is in the very structure and substance of reality.

The link between the ontological and ethical here is that be-ing is creative. Moreover, creative action is ethical action and ethical action is creative action. For Maat is both the product and producer of both. This is affirmed in the highly abstract and seemingly contradictory contention in ancient Egyptian theology that Maat is both the mother and daughter of Ra. Gardiner and others have noted this but did not see in it anything but contradiction. Therefore, referring to this statement in Papyrus No. IV of the Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series, he (1935:33, n.9) states, that "the author felt no compunction at making Ma'at at once the mother and (as usually is) the daughter of Amen-Ra." But the mother-daughter theological construct is best seen as a metaphor for producer and product. Maat is the producer of Ra in that it is truly what makes Ra, God. In a word, it is the indispensable constitu-

tive element of his being, Wiedemann (1887:570) had early realized this fact and argued that "Maat . . .is indispensable to the divinity if it wishes to act truly as divinity. Without it (Maat) Ra is only Ra as sun (his most visible expression); with it (Maat), he is the master of the universe."

As rightness and righteousness, Maat, then, is the very nature of God. Moreover, as the sacred texts teach, Maat is the breath of life to God and the other divine powers; indeed, it is their power of be-ing. But Maat is also the product of Ra, in that Maat was the created by Ra in his identity (ren) as Atum. Thus, Maat is mother and daughter of Ra, origin and offspring, producer and product. This concept finds its modern parallel in the concept of humans as both the products and producers of history. For history, as an essentially human process both makes and shapes humans and is made and shaped by them. In a word, humans are both the subject and object of history and history is both constitutive of them and constituted by them.

5.2.3 The Creative Character of Speech

Important also to the creation process and to the delineation of the potentiality and power of being is the ontological role and power of speech as a creative force. In the various creation narratives, the Creator uses speech to actualize his creation. In his identity as Atum, the Creator begins a dialog with the waters in which he is (CT

80) and in the process of self-actualization, he conceptualizes, wishes, "according to (his) heart" and thus creates himself (CT 714). Also, he uses words of power (*hḳ3, hḳ3w*) (Te Velde, 1969-70), authoritative utterance (*ḥw*) and exceptional insight (*si3*) to develop creation. Heka, as words of power, is essential to creation but it seems to function through *hu*, authoritative utterance or as Allen (1988:38) says the "divine principle of creative speech." Moreover, Heka is described by Kheti to his son Merikara as a divine gift saying, "He made for them Heka as weapons to ward off the blow of events" (136). Thus, Heka in this case and in creation activity acts as a positive force. But the central powers of creation and creativity are *Hu* and *Sia*. Forming both a conceptual and creative pair *Hu* and *Sia* enable the Creator to conceive the world and then call it into being. Through Sia, he says "I became effective in my heart/mind . . .I planned in my heart myself. I created other beings" (pBremner-Rhind, 28:24-25). Then, it is in speaking that the Creator calls into being his conception. This power is called in one text "Hu (authoritative utterance) that speaks in darkness," i.e., the darkness of precreation (CT VII:481). Also, it is said of the Creator that "he began to speak in the midst of silence (of precreation)" (I:350.IV, 6ff). "He began to call out when the earth was inert." By this means he created all things.

It is in this context that kings and queens as well as private persons sought and claimed such power. The Pyramid Text of Unas says, "I have seized Hu, authoritative utterance; I have taken control of Sia--exceptional insight" (300). And again, he says "Unas grasps Hu--authoritative utterance--eternity is brought to him and Sia (exceptional insight) is placed at his feet" (307). Likewise, referring to the divine capacity of the Creator in his name of Ptah to conceive in his heart/mind and create, Intef says "I am like Ptah as one who realizes his will" (Schenkel, 1965:378). And the steward Henenu says he is "*ḏd ḫprw, miti Nṯr*--he who speaks and it happens, one like God" (Schenkel, 1965:426). Thus, together *Hu* and *Sia* symbolize and express authoritative utterance of exceptional insight and are at the heart of both creative activity and moral practice in Maatian ethics (Karenga, 1989:xiv). For they are powers which are available to all humans, that they may understand, speak and do Maat and defend and increase good in the world in a cooperative project with the Divine.

Texts on the Creator in his identities as Ptah and Amun place even greater emphasis on creative speech. In fact, it is the creation narrative of the Creator as Ptah found in the Shabaka Text which caused Breasted (1934:37) to suggest that this may be the "background of the Logos doctrine of New Testament days." For, he notes, in this creative narrative we find "the fundamental assumption that mind or

thought is the source of everything." For the myriads of created things "came into being through that which the heart--(mind) thought and the tongue (creative speech) commanded" (see also Wilson, 1956:59ff).

The Shabaka text (Junker, 1940; Breasted, 1901) posits the preeminence of the mind/heart and the tongue as follows:

> *ḫpr n sḫm ib ns m 't nb*
> *ḥr sb3 wnt-f m-ḫnt ẖt nb(t)*
> *m-ḫnt r nb n nṯrw nbw*
> *rmṯ nb 'wt nb ḥf3t nb*
> *'nḫt ḥr k3(3)t ḥr wḏ-mdw*
> *ḫt nb mrrt.f* (Line 54)
>
> It happens that heart and tongue
> rule over all the limbs in accordance
> with the teaching that he (Ptah)
> is in every body and he is in
> every mouth of all gods, all people
> all cattle, all creeping things
> whatever lives; thinking whatever
> he wishes and commanding whatever
> he wants.

Moreover, as Bilolo (1988:73) states, the power of the heart and tongue

> . . .provient du fait qu'ils sont des organes privilégies de conception et d'expression de la pensée. Le coeur (dans le corps) pense, concoit l'idee de tout chose, idée qui sera ensuite reprise ou exprimée par la langue (dans la bouche).

Thus, the text (Line 56) says:

> *m33 irt sḏm 'nḫwy ssn(w) fnḏ*
> *s'r.sn hr ib*
> *ntf did pr 'rḳyt nb*
> *in ns wḥm m k3(3)t ḥ3ty*
>
> The seeing of the eye, the hearing of the ears,
> the breathing of the nose,
> They inform the heart
> And it makes all perception come forth
> As for the tongue it repeats what the heart
> has conceived.

The text concludes this section by saying, "For every word of God came about through what the heart conceived and the tongue commanded."

Obenga (1989:315) rightly asserts that "speech, as it is used here, has a clear ontological meaning, and this ontological speech, uttered by the demiurge, calls the world into existence." This ontological potency of speech appears also in other African cultures. Obenga (1989:316) cites the creation narrative of the Luba in which the Creator, Maweja Nangila, creates by word. "It is in that manner that Maweja Nangila called forth man who, at the time of creation bore an exact resemblance to him" (Fourche and Morlighem, 1973: 39ff). Here, we have not only a logos doctrine but also the doctrine of imago dei which appears also in Maatian theology and ethics as discussed below. This becomes, then, the paradigmatic practice of creation and effective action. And therefore, it is through this process of conception and command that again humans acts like God (*ir mi R'*, imitatio dei), "link(ing) the intellectual with the material," as Allen (1988: 46) states. For "it is the same principle through which the will of all living things work to transform the world around them."

Praise poems (*sṯsw*) to the Creator in his name of Amun also speak to the power of the creative word. One says:

wpw.f mdwt m ẖnw gr
wn.f irt nb(t)di.f dgi.sn
š3'.f sbḥ iw t3 m sgr
hmhmt.f pẖr.ti nn snw

msy.f ntt di.f 'nḫ.sn
di.f rḫ s nb w3t r šmt
'nḫ ibw.sn m33.sn sw

He began to speak in the midst of silence.
He opened all eyes and caused them to behold.
He began to cry out when the earth was
in stillness.
His roar spread about. He had no second.
He gave birth to all that exists; he caused
them to live.
He caused every person to know the way
to walk.
And their hearts lived when they saw him.
(Leiden Papyrus I 350, IV, 6-8;
Gardiner, 1905:31)

Moreover, the text says that in the process of creation, "Exceptional insight (Sia) is his heart, Authoritative utterance (Hu) is his lips. (And) His energy (ka) is that which exists through his tongue" (V, 16-17). This stress on the creative function of speech develops as a central feature of Maatian ethics and good speech (*mdt nfrt*) is seen as both moral wisdom and a moral imperative.

For the ruler, the challenge of effective ethical action as a leader is to act creatively like Ra, using *Hu* and *Sia*. Thus, it is said of Ramesses II:

You are the living likeness of your father Atum. . . ., for authoritative utterance (*ḥw*) is in your mouth, understanding (*si3*) is in your heart, and your speech is the shrine of Truth (Maat). (KRI II:356.18)

And Merikara is taught by his father Kheti that good speech or moral wisdom is essential to moral and effective leadership. He says to his son: "If you are skilled in speech you will succeed. For speech (literally the tongue) is (a

person's) sword. Speaking is stronger than all fighting and the skillful are not overcome" (Merikara, 32).

But good speech (*mdt nfrt*) is not an exclusive prerogative of the royal and the noble. As noted above, the most definitive discourse on Maat is the Book of Khun-Anup which places the task of defining the meaning and value of Maat in the mouth of a peasant. Also, Ptahhotep tells us that "Good speech (moral wisdom) is rarer than emeralds and yet it is found among female servants at the grindstones" (Ptahhotep, 52-59). These citations at once reaffirm the worth of good speech and also demonstrate its availability to and presence among even the masses. This is an important point, for Maatian ethical philosophy would lack moral authenticity if it denied or suggested an unequal access to such an ontological and ethical good as moral wisdom or good speech.

Thus, inherent in the Maatian ideal is the assumption that good speech is a vital and necessary good for everyone and that everyone has equal access to it for beneficial purposes. Again, this ideal of equality is attested to in the "Four Good Deeds of Ra" text which establishes the ontological and ethical standard of human equality (CT 1130). Such rejection of biological assignment of moral worth and goods is, as mentioned above, in stark contrast to Greek ontology with its class- and gender-biased hierarchies of human worth, purpose and virtue.

It is important to note here though that speech in Maatian ethics also carries with it the possibility of misuse. The emphasis on the moral imperative to speak and do Maat carries within it the prohibition against speaking and doing the opposite--*grg* and isfet. For as *grg* is falsehood and associated evils, isfet is the general oppositional category to Maat and signifies all things bad and impure as Maat suggests all things good and pure. To speak wrongly then is injurious to Maat and the moral community which it gives life. Thus, Phebhor teaches,

> do not make your mouth harsh or speak loudly with your tongue. For a loud voice does damage to the body just like an illness. (AEL III:220)

Moreover, Khun-Anup tells Rensi, the High Steward, that "when the secret of truth is found, falsehood is thrown on its back on the ground," that "one who lessens falsehood fosters truth," and that "judges are appointed to fight falsehood" (B1, 183, 241, 296-297). He continues saying,

> When falsehood walks it goes astray. It does not cross in the ferry; (and) it does not (progress). He who is enriched by it has no children, (indeed) no heirs on earth. And he who sails with it does not reach land.

Surely, "his boat does not moor at its landing place" (B2, 95-102). Thus, he concludes one should speak Maat and do Maat. For Maat is the ground of a good and long life in this world and an honored and eternal life in the next world.

The central concept in the affirmation of the power and potentiality of being, then, is the self-creation by the Creator, the God who brought himself into being (*nṯr ḫpr ḏs.f*) and then "made himself into millions." This self-developing God contains within himself all the elements of creation and thus from inside himself, he comes into being and then brings into being all things through creative thought and speech and effective action. This portrait of internal potential and power is painted in even more vivid imagery when the Creator recounts how he arose alone without anyone to aid him and with "no place on which to stand." And then again through creative effort he makes a space, locates himself, centers himself upon the primordial mound of creation and brings into being a universe of millions and millions of things.

This portrait of internal potential and self-actualization in the midst of non-being provides then an instructive image of the possibilities of human action and human agency. It is the image of self-cultivation and self-transformation, of finding within oneself the moral and spiritual content and will for creative transformation and actualization. For be-ing like God is be-ing like God in action. And repeatedly we read of the spiritual aspiration to "be like Ra"--in power, in knowledge, in life, in health, in endurance, in righteousness--in a word, in Maat. Thus, in the Book of Coming Forth By Day (Chapter 11), the vindicated declare

their aspiration and ability to act as divine powers, saying

> I stand up like Horus (beloved son and avenger of his father). I sit down as Ptah (Ra as Creator). I have grown strong as Djehuti (wisdom exalted). I have grown powerful as Atum (Ra as the perfector).

Such exalted claims, while appearing to be bombast to the some scholars, reflect on another level an anthropology of ultimate possibility, a conception of *snn nṯr* (imago dei) that invites elevated aspirations to be as God and one with God as will be discussed below.

I have dealt at length with the question of the potentiality and power of being because it is a pivotal ontological concept and provides a background and framework for a critical comprehension of the other fundamental motifs in Maatian ontology. Moreover, the category of potentiality is also so central to Maatian anthropology and Maatian ethics in general that a lengthy treatment of it seems compelling.

5.3 The Orderedness of Being

5.3.1 The Created Order of Maat

A second fundamental motif in Maatian ontology of ethical significance is the orderedness of being. This concept of the orderedness of being is, of course, rooted in the concept of Maat which is not only the created order itself, but also a principle of order, the rightness of order, the essence of existence as order and the performance of order.

The orderedness of being begins with the ordering of being in the process of creation. The precreation quality

of existence is not so much one of chaos and confusion but rather an unstructured or unordered and thus unrealized potentiality. The word used in the text for this precreation state of things is *tnmw* which does not mean chaos as destructive confusion, but refers to an unbounded, undeveloped or rather not-yet-developed quality of existence as noted previously. Allen (1988:20) points out that "the root verb *tnm* means 'go astray' and is used both in the literal sense ('become lost') and figuratively ('stray from correct behavior')." He goes on to suggest that

> as an abstract in this context, (i.e., the discussion of creation), it may refer to the undetermined character of the external universe (nowhere vs. the defined 'where' of the world or its lack of order) vs. the Order-Maat-of the created world.

This undetermined, unbounded character of precreation is transformed in the process of creation and creation becomes the embodiment of order, i.e., Maat. Thus, Maat is the "divine order established at the time of creation," as Frankfort (1961:63) notes. Frankfort goes on to state that this order or orderedness "is manifest in nature as normalcy of phenomena, . . .in society as justice . . .and in the individual's life as truth." Whether one agrees with the specific contentions of this conception or not, these categories of "normalcy," "justice," and "truth" which are manifestations of Maat, not only have ethical implications, but also suggest that the created order is not simply an act of divine creativity and organization, but also one of

rightness or even righteousness. Morenz's (1984:13) definition of Maat as "right order" and general rightness affirms the importance of this conception. It is, as we shall argue below, this rightness and lawfulness of the created order which is so fundamental to the ancient Egyptian assumption of the essential goodness of being. For as Wilson (1956:48) points out, Maat was for the ancient Egyptians, "the cosmic force of harmony, order, stability and security, coming down from the first creation as the organizing quality of created phenomena. . . ."

As an "organizing quality of created phenomena, Maat is both a principle of order and" as Frankfort (1961:63) states, "the essence of existence." For it not only is a principle of universal order, but a fundamental characteristic and quality of the universe which causes and sustains its existence (Tobin, 1989:80). It is in this context, that Wiedemann (1887:564) in his early study of Maat maintains that "Maat is for the ancient Egyptian a kind of essence, a thing existing everywhere and always." For it is the very nature of being.

In Coffin Text 80, order is posed as correlative to life. Life in its essence is Maat and in this case ordered being. Thus, the Creator says of this interrelatedness:

> My living daughter is Tefnut. She shall exist with her brother Shu. Life is his name. Maat (order) is her name. I shall live with my twins, my fledglings. I will live in the midst of them. One of them behind me and one of them within me. Life will lie down with my daughter Order (Maat).

> One of them with me and one of them about me. It is on them on whom I rely, their arms being about me.

Thus, the Creator is infused with and surrounded by life and order. And as noted above, life itself is infused with and informed by Maat, i.e., order, rightness, justice, harmony, balance, etc. in the world. It is this cosmic and ontological principle that the ancient Egyptians apply to concrete practice in daily life.

As the orderedness of being, Maat endowed the world with a law of nature, operative and expressed in the anticipated regularity of processes and phenomena, i.e., the rise and setting of the sun, the rise and fall of the Nile, the coming and going of seasons, but also the inevitable triumph of good and the eventual defeat of evil in both the world and society. It is this triumphant character of Maat, its mightiness and durability in contrast to the self-destructive character of the evil that one finds in Khun-Anup's discourse on Maat (Vogelsang, 1964; Parkinson, 1991) and in the Sebait of Ptahhotep (Zába, 1956).

5.3.2 The Social Order of Maat

As the ancient Egyptians believed in the principle that as it is in heaven so was it and so should it be on earth, Maat as natural law and order was developed into moral law and order. It is in this context that Amun says to Amenhotep that he "will rule it (the land) as King as if I were king of Upper and Lower Egypt" (Urk. IV:1676.1) Virtue or

moral law was given the same immanent status and function in the social world as physical law in the cosmic and natural order. In fact, the very distinction between the moral and the natural, the cosmic and the social, was never sharp and very often non-existent. For Maat was an inclusive cosmic order, in a word, the very orderedness of being.

Within the concept of the orderedness of being is the concept of balance in the world; a balance that is constantly challenged by the negative (isfet) and reaffirmed in the righteous acts (Maat) of humans. Khun-Anup explains this in one of his descriptions of the essentiality of Maat. Thus he says, "*'ḳ3yt nt t3 irt m3't*--The balance of the world lies in doing Maat" (B1, 158-159). He goes on to describe the just leader as the embodiment of Maat who is the balance and norm. And to indicate further how essential order as justice and rightness is, he says, "you are one with the balance. If it tilts, you will tilt also" (B1, 161-163). Thus, the upholding of Maat as order, rightness, justice, as noted above, has ontological and ethical implications. And one is obligated to act accordingly for the benefit of society and the cosmos.

In the Sebait of Ptahhotep, as noted above, we find also Maat as an unchanging order of existence, as the ground of power, effectiveness and rightness in the world (Ptahhotep, 88-91). Ptahhotep's focus is on its endurance as both a cosmic and social principle. Thus, he notes, "it has not

been disturbed or challenged since the times of its Creator." It endures as a principle in social life allowing the upright to say, "it is the legacy of my father." What under-girds the confidence implicit in Ptahhotep's claims is the assumption of an order in which there is lawful regularity. And this order is by his own assertion, none other than Maat which by its very definition is order.

Thus, the natural order of the cosmos was conceived as being duplicated and reflected in the social order and when disorder threatened in either, right action was required to drive out isfet and return Maat to its place. As Tobin (1989:81) argues,

> Not only was there a natural universal order within the cosmos, but, because of this natural order, human and state affairs had to be conducted with righteousness and justice.

In a word, "[a] righteous and ordered cosmos of necessity demanded a righteous and ordered life on the part of those who inhabited it." And "anyone who did not conduct his life in such a fashion was of necessity seen as incongruous with the innate nature of the universe and of human society."

It is this demand for the establishment, restoration and maintenance of Maat in the natural and social world that plays a fundamental role in establishing the ontological grounds of Maatian ethical obligation. For the justification (*m3ʿ ḫrw*) of persons, i.e., their recognized right to be welcomed in the realm of eternal life (Amenta), depends on their being able to truthfully declare themselves inno-

cent of isfet and doers of Maat. In the context of our discussion of Maat as order, the essential ethical obligation is, as Bonnel (1990:82) points out, "the performance of order." If the orderedness of being is essential to the maintenance and flourishing of life and indeed to the maintenance of the cosmos itself, then doing Maat can be and is translated as the performance of order. At the same time, it is important to note that given Maat's conceptual elasticity, to perform order is also to do justice, speak truth, be reciprocal, balanced and in harmony, practice propriety and do righteousness in general.

Thus, the orderedness of one's ethical action is its conformity to moral and natural law, and lawfulness as anticipated regularity is central to the moral and natural order. Wilson (1956:48) is correct in his contention, then, that such a concept of Maat as natural and moral order means that Maat "was not simply justice in terms of legal administration, it was the just and proper relationship between the ruler and the ruled" as well as between one person and another. Likewise, truth was not simple correspondence to reality, but things "being in their true and proper places in the order created and maintained by (the Creator)." And propriety as a virtue is not simply the following of rules, but the internalization of norms of fittingness and the acceptance of their rightness and efficacy so that one becomes the embodiment of Maat, i.e., the truly Maatian

person as the writers of the Declarations of Virtue describe themselves.

It is important to note here how the concept of "*tnmw*" or indefiniteness in the description of precreation unorderedness becomes in the moral realm a way to describe deviation from correct or right behavior. To go astray, then, brings up the image of and parallels the lack of boundaries or boundedness in precreation or non-being and suggests both creativity and morality require orderedness. It also indicates that establishing and maintaining boundaries are central to the Maatian moral project as evidenced by the Declarations of Innocence's explicit and repeated concern with not trespassing (*thi*). In fact, all its suggested prohibitions can be seen as prohibitions against immoral and improper boundary-crossing. Thus, as with the concept of Maat, itself, ontological categories become moral categories and reflect an interrelatedness essential to the concept of the continuity of being.

5.4 The Continuity of Being

5.4.1 The Creative Source of Being

A third basic motif in Maatian ontology is the continuity of being. As Finnestad (1989b:31) notes, "there appears to be no essential ontological separation (though there is a conceptual distinction) between the species, . . .matter and spirit, body and soul . . .(or) God's world . . .(and) man's world." In fact, he continues, "the categories

applied in Egyptian religious ontology do not accentuate the differences . . .(r)ather one sees the opposite interest: to stress affinities and connections" (See also Finnestad, 1986, 1985). This fundamental concept of Maatian ontology has significant import for both Maatian anthropology and ecological ethics. For it challenges the radical separation of humans from other species and nature and places them in a more modest and relative role in the larger context of existence.

The continuity of being is rooted first of all in the fact that the Creator is the source of all existence. It is the Creator in his identities as Atum, Ptah and Amen who is explicitly alone, without a second and who conceives and brings into being a myriad of beings. As Atum, he is, the Book of Vindication tells us, the Lord of transformations (*nb ḫprw*), the Lord to the Limit (*nb.r.ḏr*) and the "Lord of Totality" (*nb tm*) (CT V:211; VI:131k; II:27b). Containing all within himself, he is the "Complete One" (*tmm*) (CT II:174e). His material for creation is literally himself and all else including the other divine powers (*nṯrw*) are but manifestations of him (Allen, 1988:51). Even the primeval mound of creation, the place of his centering is <u>of</u> and <u>from</u> himself.

Again, the Book of Knowing the Creations is instructive here (pBremner-Rhind; Faulkner, 1933; Budge, 1890). Although this text is called the Book of Knowing the

Creations in modern Maatian ethics, its title in the text is literally "the Book of Knowing the Forms or Transformations of Ra (*md3t nt rḫ ḫprw nw R'*)." It is in these transformations that creation is executed and hence the modern title "Knowing the Creations." Moreover, *ḫpr* in its basic form as well as in its causative form can and does mean "bring about" (Faulkner, 1981:189, 2). It is also causative in the phrase *ḫpr ds.f*, self-creating, self-generating (Wb. III, 261, iv). Thus, the transformations of Ra which Allen calls the "developments of Ra" identify and speak to a creative process, marked by divine self-transformation, expansion and differentiation. The central point here is that creation is essentially the Divine developing into various forms, an evolution from his essence.

Creation is first a product of *ib*: mind and heart. The Creator says:

> *3ḫt.n.i m ib.i*
> *sn̆ṯ.n.i m ḥr.i*
> *iri.n.i irry nbt w'i.kwi*
> *snṯ.n.i m ib.i*
> *ḳm3.n.i ky ḫprw*
> *'s3 ḫprw nw Ḫpri* (28, 24-25)

> I became effective in my heart/mind
> I surveyed with my sight
> I made everything which was made alone
> I laid the foundation in my heart/mind
> I created other forms of existence
> And many were the forms of the
> Bringer-into-Being.

It is this stress on creation as a product of heart/mind that leads Obenga (1989:306) to assert that as the Absolute being, the Creator is love, will and "above all, reason: he

conceives, designs in his heart (*ib*), that is to say, in all consciousness and in all lucidity." Therefore, the creation is an interrelated expression of the Creator's *ib*; heart/ mind. And this is the first aspect of the continuity of being.

Secondly, the Creator makes himself who is one into many by self-expansion and differentiation. He literally broadens out and expands (*wsḫ*) in the process of creation. And his coming into being causes being itself as well as other forms of beings to come into being. Obenga offers an excellent understanding of this process as one of self-affirmation as well as self-infusion in the world. He (1989:306) states that as "an inaugural act, creation also serves as proof, as demonstration of the Existing's existence: 'I exist, therefore existence exists.' For the Existing, to manifest oneself to existence is to bring other forms of existence into being (*iri*) is to create, to make (*km3*)."

Here is both reaffirmation of the continuity of being and the reciprocal nature of that unity. For it is in creating others that the Creator is reaffirmed in his own existence. On the social level, this translates into Mbiti's (1970:141) classical assertion concerning African ontology: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am." It is, of course, an ontological and anthropological assertion at the same time. Thus, it represents the

Kemetic conception of interrelated and interdependent character of reality. And it also represents the Kemetic thrust to relate all knowledge and understanding to the concreteness of a lived life.

5.4.2 Differentiation in Unity

Creation of being is, in fact, the development of the source of being, i.e., the Creator. For as Bilolo (1986:45) notes, "Having become conscious of himself, Atum begins to extract (tirer) from his being other beings." Thus, the Book of Knowing the Creations (pBremner-Rhind, 28, 20ff) says, " When I came into being, being itself came into being. All being came into being when I came into being." Or again, "I came into being in the anterior era of the world and a multitude of forms of existence came into being from (this) beginning." Stressing his internal creative capacity, the Creator says that having conceived the plan of existence, he moved to carry it out by the force within him. He says, "I made forms of existence through the power within me (*iri.i ḫprw im m b3 pwy*). And finally, one of his central modes of creation after authoritative utterance was spreading out in the world. This is, of course, another way to say creation was the development of his being which brought other beings into being.

Here Allen's translation of "*ḫprw*" as development(s) is useful and appropriate, for the divine manifestations are developments from the single source of the Creator who

having been one, transformed his unity into infinite diversity. Having developed himself and the very process of being and becoming, as Allen (1988:30) posits: "The process continued geometrically, through the transmission of the original matter into the elements of the world: 'the developments of developments became many', ..." And as Allen concludes, "[i]n this way the infinite variety of all existence can be traced back to a single ultimate source, a linear progression that is symbolized in the image of the Ennead," i.e., the nine original offspring of Atum--Shu and Tefnut, Nut and Geb, Osiris, Isis and Horus and Seth and Nephthys.

5.4.3 Being and the Transmission of Essence

This process involves both the continuity of being and the shared essence of being through transmission from the Creator. This transmission is both of essence and energy. As the text states, "You put your arms around them as the arms of ka, that your essence (ka) may be in them" (Pyr. 1652). Faulkner (1969:246, 247 n.2) translates "ka" in the second instance also as essence and makes a note that "the second (ka) has here the meaning of 'essence' or the like, referring to the divine nature passed on by Atum to his off-spring." This metaphor of embracing, as Allen (1988:69 n.85) points out is "the standard means of transmission" and is emulated in human life by "the transmission of ka from father to son" as expressed in Ptahhotep's definition of the

good and hearing (*sḏmw*) son (564ff). Embracing itself is also a metaphor of unity, a reaffirmation of oneness of the Creator and his creation.

The transmission of ka, then, is the transmission of essence or nature. As Frankfort (1948b:68) states, "the word 'nature' is often an appropriate translation for ka." Moreover, he states, "It is the ka which makes a person into the man he is; (and) it is through one's ka that one can achieve something." This concept of a shared nature or essence with the divine is a fundamental tenet of Maatian anthropology and central to the concept of human potentiality and power. It parallels and reinforces the *snn nṯr* (imago dei) concept found in the Book of Kheti for Merikara which teaches that humans are the flock of the Good Shepherd, Ra, and that "they are his images who came from his body" (Merikara, 132). Thus, in a real sense, there is no dichotomy between the Creator and humans, only a necessary distinction. But on a larger level, as the Shabaka Text posits, not just humans are in the image of the Creator but the whole world. As Allen (1988:45) notes, this a concept appears in a passage from the text which says that through creative thought and speech "something developed in Atum's image." This "something" was the universe which was created out of the divine substance of Atum himself. This process of the Creator investing himself in the world is called by Allen (1988:42) the "information of matter."

In addition to the continuity of being having basis in the concept of the common origin of all things from a single source, the Creator and a resultant shared essence, the concept of Maat offers an equally important and interrelated foundation for such a contention. Indeed, Maat is not only the shared essence of God, humans and nature, but a binding agent also. For the ancient Egyptian, Maat, as the order of creation, "bound all things together in an indestructible unity" (Tobin, 1989:13). Therefore, "the universe, the natural world, the state and the individual were all seen as parts of a wider order generated by Maat." It was, as argued above, the "organizing quality of phenomena," that ran through and united all things. As stated above, Maat was the essence of existence which was not only the essence of the Creator and humans but also of the natural world. Such a concept of Maat as a binding agent of all things in the universe and as the shared essence of the Creator, humans and nature not only posits the basis for a strong ecological ethics, as will be discussed below, but also contributes to the concept of the essential goodness of being.

5.5 The Essential Goodness of Being

5.5.1 The Ontological Anchor of Maat

A fourth ontological concept of major ethical value is the concept of the essential goodness of being. This concept like the others above and the last one below, is rooted

in the concept of Maat. Maat was to the ancient Egyptians both ontological and ethical anchor, giving them a sense of security, confidence and potentiality. As Tobin (1989:86) states, because of the concept of Maat, "the universe was seen as essentially benevolent to man." In a word, it was ordered, regular, dependable under the rule of the divine. The world grounded in Maat and ruled by Maat was a realm of positiveness and possibilities especially for the righteous. As the ground of being, Maat was a goodness and beauty (*nfrw*) which embrace the entirety of existence. The Amarna hymns which celebrated the orderedness, rightness, unity and beauty of creation are reflective of this attitude (Sandman, 1938: 10-15, 93-96).

A standard hymn to the Divine which appears in many tombs of the period says in praise of the Divine:

> You are radiant, beautiful
>   and mighty
> Your love is great, immense
> Your rays light up all faces
> Your bright color causes hearts to live
> When you fill the Two Lands
>   with your love
> August God who constructed himself
> Who made every land and created
>   what is in it
> All peoples, cattle and animals
> All trees that grow on the soil
> They live when you rise for them
> You are mother and father of all
>   that you make. (Sandman, 1938:10-15)

The picture here is one of a beautiful and ordered world; created by a beautiful, mighty and august God who is ever concerned for his creation--humans, animals and plants. He

brings light and floods the world with love (merut) and is indeed "mother and father (in that order) of all that you make." This is clearly a portrait of mothered-fathered world, given life, love beauty and goodness by the Divine.

This sense of ordered goodness, of the world being grounded in Maat, though clearly more expansively expressed in the 18th Dynasty and afterwards, is nevertheless apparent from the Old Kingdom. The Pyramid Texts speak of heaven being at peace and earth being in joy because Maat is in its place (PT 1775). And certainly, the locus classicus of the definition of Maat and its being the ground of good in the world is the Sebait of Ptahhotep which speaks of Maat as great, effective and enduring. Likewise, the Declarations of Virtue in the Old Kingdom clearly establish Maat as Good and the ground of good in the world. Thus, Seshem-nefer (Urk. I:57.11ff) says of Maat, it is good (*bw nfr pw*) and that it is the good which God wills, wishes and loves (*mrrt nfr*). It is thus seen as needful on earth and in heaven, that by which the Divine, the natural and the social live. And it is here that the concept of offering Maat to God evolves as both a ritual and ethical practice.

The spiritual and ethical impact of Maat, then, was one of giving the ancient Egyptians a sense of being-at-home in the world, a world in which evil could never be dominant for long and right would always be triumphant. In other words, consciousness of Maat in the world provided a sense of

confidence that right would eventually triumph regardless of evil, disorder or other negatives in the world. It is this confidence that led the ancient Egyptians to praise Maat for its durability, worth and effectiveness and its ability to provide the good life in this world and the next. Such was the faith in the power and effectiveness of Maat.

This faith in the power and effectiveness of Maat and the goodness it implies, does not mean that there was no recognition of the reality of evil. On the contrary, the sacred texts of ancient Egypt recognize the continuing presence of evil as a part of reality, but they are equally sure of its defeat (Hornung, 1982:212-213). Unlike Zoroastrianism in which good and evil occupy almost equal status in an ongoing war, Maat accepts no such moral dualism. Apophis, enemy of Ra, or Seth, enemy of Osiris, are real forces of evil and discord, but they are inevitably defeated as the texts constantly express and reaffirm. Likewise, all forms of evil in the world are defeated and those who assume these qualities come to no good end.

Thus, Ptahhotep concedes that evil is not only in the world but also in some cases, prospers, but it is in the end a false prosperity masking a more definitive moral and spiritual failure. Therefore, he states, "Wickedness may seize wealth, but wrong-doing never brings its wares safe to port. In the end, it is Maat which endures (so that) a person says 'it is the legacy of my father (and mother)'"

(Ptahhotep, 94-98). Likewise, Amenomope assures us that "The boat of the covetous is abandoned in the mud, but the boat of the self-mastered (*grw*) sails with the wind" (7, 10-11). And Khun-Anup teaches that "people fall low through greed and those who prey on others achieve no (real) success" (B1, 290-292).

Finally, the role of Maat in providing the basis for the Kemetic assumption of the essential goodness of being is, of course, found in the Maatian theology of creation. And here one finds that the essential goodness of being evolves not only from the Maatian orderedness and rightness of being but also, as noted above, from the fact of God's having created the world and imbued it with his divinity. Therefore, Maat, as orderedness and rightness ever triumph must be joined with the concept of divine self-infusion in the world for an inclusive delineation of the foundation of the Kemetic view of the essential goodness of being.

5.5.2 Cooperative Character of Being

As the ground of being, it's truth, it's rightness, it's order, it's goodness, it's eternalness, it's essential quality, Maat plays a fundamental role in shaping being and giving it a dynamic character. Maat is, in fact, also the cosmic glue that holds the world together that gives it meaning and motion. It is thus an ongoing project and product which must be constantly realized and reinforced (Hornung, 1989:135). And it is in this world maintenance

project that humans collaborate and cooperate with the Divine. The relationship is a reciprocal one in which the Creator who brought being into being and gave life requires Maat from the living, so that he may live by it and that the world and existence itself may be maintained. This creates a cooperative and mutually-beneficial project between the Divine and humans.

Assmann (1989a:109) has called attention to the collaborative and cooperative project of God and humans in the dynamic maintenance of the world, indeed of existence. He calls the process "une communauté de participation et de collaboration" based on reciprocity. But his stress is mainly on ritual and performative discourse which "produces the reality it expresses." Maat, however, is not only ritual and performative discourse, it is also a social practice which as Rekhmira says, "spreads goodness throughout the land" so that it causes people to live and flourish. Thus, he says,

> wṯs.n.i m3ʽt r ḳ3w n pt
> pẖr.n.i nfrw.s r wsḫ n t3
> ḥtp.s n fnḏ.sn m (mḥyt)
>
> I exalted Maat to the heights of heaven.
> I caused its goodness to overflow the
> breadth of the earth.
> So that it rested in their nose(s) like
> the (northwind). (Urk. IV:1077.13-15)

Maat here is life-giving and life-affirming social practice whose essential elements include:

> judging the humble and rich (alike); rescuing the
> weak from the strong; restraining the rage of the

> evil of character; suppressing the greedy in his hour; protecting the widow; establishing the heir on the seat of the father; giving bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty and meat, oil and clothes to those who had none, making the old man secure and old woman say, 'It is a good deed;' hating evil; not being deaf to the weak; not accepting bribes; and standing justified before God. (Urk. IV:1077.17-1078.17)

It is within this broad concept of Maat as social practice which is generative of human well-being and flourishing that Khun-Anup gives the classic definition of Maat-doing as "breath to the nose," i.e., life-giving as early as the Middle Kingdom. The New Kingdom text of Rekhmira reaffirms this, saying he caused Maat to rest in the nose of the people, i.e., it was the breath of life to them. This conception of Maat as life-giving breath, even as the generative dynamic of existence can also be seen in the 18th Dynasty Stela of Horemheb (Urk. IV:2098.11-13) which says,

> Hail to you, Maat, Lady of the Northwinds
> Who opens the nose of the living
> And who gives breath to those in his Bark (Ra's).

Maat, then, gives life, and thus, the ontological and the anthropological are interrelated and interactive. For through human intervention by doing Maat, existence itself is dynamically maintained and life is made to flourish.

This linking of life (being) and Maat is at the very first creation (*sp tpy*). For the Creator, Coffin Text 80 and pBremmer-Rhind say, is one who made himself three: he as himself, he as life and he as Maat (truth, justice, right-

eousness), in a word, rightness of existence. Therefore, he linked the substance of existence to the dynamic of life.

Assmann (1989a:110) has argued that the Kemetic conception of the world is anthropocentric. However, modern Maatian thought poses the Kemetic conception of the world as "anthropocosmic." Tu (1985:137-138) explains this term by the central contention that "the real meaning of being human lies in the mutuality of Heaven and man and the unity of all things." Furthermore, in such a conception, "the family and by extension, the state and the world are integral parts of the 'fiduciary community' where organismic connections unite all modalities of being in a common bond." In Tu's neo-Confucian philosophy, the organismic substance is chi which undergirds and pervades all existence, and Tao is the way by which one cultivates and benefits from the holistic character of being. In Maatian ontology, one word names both the unifying organismic substance and the way--moral, spiritual and cosmic assertion--to wit, Maat. To do Maat is to "exalt it to the heights of heaven . . .and cause its goodness to overflow the breath of the earth" so that it generates and sustains both existence and life. And the word *t3* used here for earth can and does mean the world at the same time.

This, indeed, is an ontology which poses being as life and life as a dynamic process of constantly becoming in the context of cooperative and collaborative projects whose central goal is the constant realization of Maat. It is

this constant thrust to renew itself that being is dynamic. Again, the Creator in the creation narrative says, "When I came into being Being itself came into being--*ḫpr.i ḫpr ḫprw*" (pBremmer-Rhind, 28:20, 26:21-22; Budge, 1890; Faulkner, 1933). In this context of creation, being is processual, it is a coming-into-being. In, a word, being is becoming. Creation, then, does not begin a "cycle of existence," but the process of existence. Here again, Allen's translation of *ḫpr* as development fits within this concept of a dynamic being.

It is this interpretation of real being as becoming that an anthropology of becoming takes shape. Thus, extending the existent becomes both an ontological and an anthropological process and imperative. For existence depends on the presence of Maat and humans are morally obligated to speak it and do it so that it is maintained and increased in the world. Therefore, again, Khun-Anup says:

> Anyone who lessens falsehood creates
> (*sḫpr*) Maat.
> Anyone who creates good reduces evil.
> (B1, 241-242)

This capacity for adding to the good and reducing the evil in the world is, of course, central to Maatian moral metaphysics.

The verb *sḫpr*, which Khun-Anup uses, means create, but it is at its root a causative verb which means "cause to be" or "bring into being." In fact, Faulkner (1981:240) lists "bring into being" first as its meaning and then "create"

and "make" afterwards. What this passage from Khun-Anup suggests, then, is that Maat and the good which it is can be ontologically as well as socially brought into being, for Maat is in fact a primordial essence or substance which undergirds and infuses the world. Likewise, as noted above, isfet or evil can be reduced in the world as an existence. Assmann (1990:217) has stated that ordinary humans cannot create (*sḫpr*) Maat, only do it (*ir m3ʿt*) in a framework of created Maat which only a king can create. Khun-Anup's statement contradicts this as well as the offering of Maat rituals (Teeter, 1990).

Hornung (1989:144) has argued that this passage and the continual striving it represents to increase Maat in the world "does not imply the complete elimination of lies, irrationality, and meanness from the world, since these will exist as long as humans do; they are a part of human frailty." He goes on to say that "[h]uman beings can do almost anything but they cannot change." Hornung is certainly correct in his perception of Maat-doing and Maat-offering as a contribution to the increase of Maat in the world. He is also correct in his contention that such constant striving which Maat-contribution requires will not eventually eliminate evil from the world, although one should note they are concepts of a Golden Age where ostensibly these deficiencies do not exist (Kákosky, 1981). But he is less correct, it seems to me, when he says that the evils

he listed are part of human frailty and will exist as long as humans do and that humans cannot change. Here we raise the question of evil in the world as an ontological presence. And it is essential to understand its origin and meaning for Maat.

5.5.3 Being and Evil

The question of evil in a Maat-grounded world is a central and unavoidable one. It begins with recognition of the existence of evil and proceeds to questions concerning the origin, nature and meaning of evil (isfet) in the world. A major tendency in Egyptology is to look for and discover the origins of evil in human nature in search of parallels with Judeo-Christian teachings. But, the evidence does not support such an interpretation and thus a discussion of this contention by major scholars in Egyptology is merited.

Assmann (1990:215-216) has asserted that in Kemetic thought, "Isfet lies not in the nature of creation but in the nature of the human heart, i.e., free will, ..." He bases this claims on CT 1130 in which the Creator in listing His Four Good Deeds says,

> *iw ir.n.i s nb mi snw.f*
> *n wḏ.i ir.sn isft*
> *in ibw.sn hḏ ḏdt.i*
>
> I made every person like his fellow.
> I did not command them to do evil.
> It was their hearts that violated what
> I said.

Morenz reads this passage in essentially the same way Assmann does. Thus, he (1984:58) interprets the passage as

saying "the evil in the world is the consequence of this freedom to forsake God's will."

Hornung (1982:213) gives us a double answer on the question. On one hand, he offers an answer in the context of discussing the lack of the problem of theodicy in Kemetic religion. He says this is so because "Evil is inherent in the non-existent and hence is older than the gods and present in the world from the beginning." He is correct about evil being present at the beginning, but he does not leave it there. He goes on to say after quoting CT 1130, "It is the fault of human beings, but also the consequence of their origin in blindness, that they leave space for wrongdoing in their hearts (the organ that determines action)." Given what he has said, Hornung cannot sustain these two positions without logical problems. It is either true that evil was from the beginning or came afterwards with humans. It is my contention that the texts attest to the first and yield no serious ground for the second contention.

Certainly, if we are talking about evil in the world of humans, this passage, CT 1130, is rightly read as human evil in the world being a consequence of human wrong use of the faculty of free will. And Maatian ethics has no problem agreeing with Kant (1960:24) saying that evil is possible in the human world

> . . .only as a determination of free will (Willkür) and since the will (Willkür) can be apprais-

> ed as good or evil only by means of its maxims, this propensity to evil must consist of the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law.

The problem, however, is that in Maatian ethics and ontology, the argument of free will of humans does not answer the question of evil as a constitutive part of being.

In Maatian ethics, there is no concept of "original sin" or "evil by nature" in regards to humans. So the ground of evil as an ontological principle must be discovered and determined elsewhere. The concept of isfet is not simply a category of morality but one also of ontology. Evil, as isfet, existed before humans. It existed as disorder at the beginning of time and later as confusion and crime in the Seth principle (Te Velde, 1977; Griffiths, 1960). Thus, evil and disorder overlap and are interchangeable (Baines, 1991:163). It can be argued as it is in modern Maatian thought, that evil as disorder existed even in pre-creation, as *tnmw*, the primordial unboundedness. It is not moral evil, but it poses clearly a conceptual pillar in our understanding of evil as an ontological principle. As noted above, the root verb of *tnmw*, *tnm*, means 'go astray' and is used in both the literal sense ('become lost') and figuratively ('stray from correct behavior')" (Allen, 1988:20). Moreover, as the uncreated, orderless character of the universe, it stands as an opposite or contrast to Maat. Thus, there are several important theoretical conceptions which this aspect of creation

provide. The first conception is that *tnmw* as an abstract may refer to an ontological or anthropological condition, i.e., as "going astray," being lost or <u>outside the boundaries of Maat</u>. Secondly, *tnmw* as well as the other four qualities which characterize the pre-creation world, offer a model of contrast with their opposites in the created, Maat-established world and "were seen as a kind of 'dynamic tension' between potentiality and actuality that somehow contributed to the act that initiated creation" (Allen, 1988:20). What is key here is that opposites--Maat (order) and *tnmw* (disorder) create a dynamic process which is creative. It is this dynamic tension between good and evil, Maat and isfet which aids in a critical understanding of the Maatian concept of evil as an ontological as well as an anthropological principle. A third conceptual contribution of the creation narrative to our understanding of evil is that creation and order do not totally overcome or end uncreation or disorder. What is established is a process of continual renewal of Maat and the constant extension of the existent good.

Although there is a passage in Chapter 175 of Coming Forth which attributes evil in existence to unidentified divine powers, the divine power to which evil is clearly attached is Seth (*st<u>h</u>*). Seth, then is clearly the principle of evil. Moreover, unlike Lucifer in Judeo-Christian thought, there is no narrative of his fall from grace or

favor, nor any record of his moral deterioration after virtue. In fact, it is said of Seth, that he began his evil before birth. The text says,

> *k3.n.f ḏw nn pr.n.f m ẖt*
> *sḫpr ẖnnw nn ḫpr rn.f* (Urk. VI:39.8-9)
>
> He conceived evil before he came from the womb.
> He created confusion before he had a name.

Moreover, the text says Seth is he "who created evil, who repeated offenses, who planned revolt wrongfully" (Urk. VI: 39.1-2) Finally, the text says of him:

> btn.n.f wḏt Nb-r-ḏr
> ddw n Irw-wnnt
>
> He disobeyed the command of the Lord of
> the universe
> The word of the Creator of that which
> exists. (Urk. VI:39.6-7)

It is in this context that the same text says of Seth, "may you cause evil to happen to him who created it (*sḫpr.tn ḏw n km3.f*)" (Urk. VI:39.10).

As Seth, evil is both problematic and essential, a concept which finds a parallel in the Dogon conception of Ogo, the bringer of the negative, the rebellious against Amma, the Creator (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1986:Chapter II). Like Seth, Ogo is a paradigm of aggressiveness, violation, chaos and unrightful appropriation. Like Seth, who kills his brother Osiris, Ogo kills his brother, Nommo, and Nommo is resurrected and justified as was Osiris (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1986:329ff). Central to both narratives on the entrance of evil in the world is that they contain both a

positive and negative conception of the two paradigms of evil, Seth and Ogo.

In a papyrus (p. Leiden I, 346.1, 11-12) which deals with the meaning of epagomena days, the third epagomena day is identified as the birthday of Seth. Of this, the papyrus says:

> *msw sth pw*
> *š3 hnnw*
> *š3 irt hpw Psdt '3t*
>
> This is the birth of Seth
> The origin of confusion
> The beginning of the jurisdiction of the
> Great Divine Ennead.

As Kákosky (1981:89) points out, inherent in this statement is the fact that " . . .the birth of Seth means, on the one hand the beginning of confusion, while on the other hand, it also calls for the administration of justice for the very purpose of ending confusion." Thus, disorder seems to provide an impetus for the establishing of order or as the texts say, for the return of Maat to its place or again for establishing Maat in the place of isfet.

In spite of the clearly negative role Seth or Ogo has in the explication and understanding of evil in the world, then, both seem essential to the concept of good or order. Frankfort (1948b:22) calls attention to the fact that in spite of the evil that he represents, "Seth is perennially subdued by Horus, but never destroyed." For him this represents both the essentiality of conflict, its subjugation and the resultant equilibrium this process produces.

What appears to be projected here is a necessary dialectic built in the very structure of being, i.e., a process of order and disorder, conflict and resolution, Maat and isfet, with Maat seen as inevitably triumphant.

Te Velde (1977:81-82) rightly notes that this process is also evident in the dialectic tension between Ra and his antagonist, Apophis who is the principle of chaos, in the narrative of the sun's circuit. There is never any doubt that the Maat of Ra will triumph over the isfetic threats of Apophis. But the concept of evil here is essential to the conceptualization and understanding of Good. In the struggle between the son of Osiris, Horus and his uncle, Seth, we witness the Kemetic drawing of both ontological and anthropological boundaries (Te Velde, 1977:59ff). For Seth, like Ogo, is a boundary violator. Therefore, Te Velde (1977:60) says, "The separating of Horus and Seth is equalled to setting a boundary between the cosmos and the chaos surrounding it like a flood." This narrative becomes a paradigm for separating, boundary-drawing and contrasting distinctions in reality: heaven and earth, life and death, right and might, justice and injustice, order and disorder, and indeed, Maat and isfet. What is especially interesting about this division is that it is still conceived as a whole. In a word, it is a Kemetic conception and again it is a Dogon one, that "a totality comprises opposites" (Frankfort, 1948b:19). Thus, the king, God's representative

on earth, is said to embody both Horus and Seth who are referred to as the two companions (*rḥwy*), suggesting a totality comprising opposites in contradiction and conflict.

The concepts which can be gleaned from both the narrative of creation and the Osirian narrative to construct a critical understanding of the Kemetic concept of evil are similar and mutually reinforcing. They essentially articulate a conception framed and informed by the following factors:

1) good/order and evil/disorder were at the beginning of creation;
2) evil and disorder are often interchangeable and overlap;
3) even though there is a clear distinction between Maat and isfet, the two are seen as comprising a whole in a dynamic cosmic drama of the conflict and struggle of good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice, order and disorder;
4) the struggle against the negative and evil gives increased meaning, urgency and triumph to the positive and good; and
5) Maat (good) is always triumphant. For as Ptahhotep taught, evil may triumph temporarily or even on earth for a long time, but in the end, it never lands safely at port. On the contrary, it is Maat that endures (*w3ḥ*).

The essential lesson here is that evil as an ontological presence exists in the very structure of being as part of a totality comprising opposites. Moreover, it exists because being is a structure and process of possibility, and possibility requires all options--in this case, Maat and isfet and their innumerable variations.

5.6 The Eternalness of Being

5.6.1 The Telos of Being

A fifth and final ontological concept with significant ethical import is the concept of the eternalness of being. This concept is an important one because not only is it central to understanding and explicating Maat, the ground of being, but also because it is usually argued in Egyptological literature that Maat is the source of a putative Kemetic view of the static concept of the universe. Frankfort (1961) and Wilson (1948a) did much to contribute to this view, but it is now a well-established contention among Egyptologists. Frankfort (1961), Wilson (1956) and Tobin (1989) et al are correct in their assumption that Maat was highly contributive to the ancient Egyptian's ethical and general philosophical optimism about life and human possibility. But they are on less tenable ground in maintaining that this lead to a static concept of the universe. In his work on Kemetic religion, Tobin (1989:78) argues that for the ancient Egyptians "[b]ecause of the reality of Maat, there could not possibly have been any better mode of

existence, for the cosmos was already perfected." He goes on to say that "For such a reason, the Egyptian religious and moral mind was never forced to develop any concept of an eschatology or even teleology." These claims pose both a problem of conceptual correctness and categorical preciseness and serve as an instructive example of points for theoretical challenge which lay essential grounds for expansion and enrichment and critical discourse on Maatian ethics, specifically and ancient Egyptian culture in general.

The problem of categorical preciseness evolves from the failure to define eschatology. Tobin is clearly incorrect, if he refers here to eschatology as that "branch of theology or doctrines dealing with death, resurrection, judgment, immortality, etc." as defined by standard dictionary definitions (Webster's, 1988:463). In fact, much of ancient Egyptian religious literature which Egyptologists call mortuary literature deals with this question, i.e., the Pyramid Texts, the Book of Vindication, the Mystery (Sesheta) Texts, and certainly the Book of Coming Forth By Day. There is, of course, also substantive concern for this subject in Maatian ethical literature, i.e., the Sebait, the Declarations of Virtue, the Book of Khun-Anup, and the Declarations of Innocence which are the focus of this study. If Tobin means something else by eschatology, he has not stated it and herein lies either the incorrectness or conceptual inadequacy of his contentions.

As Owens (1972:48) has pointed out in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the concept of "End" (eschaton) in eschatology contains two possible meanings.

> First, it can mean the end of each individual human life. Second, it can mean the end of the world-or more narrowly, of the human race. In the first, the individualistic, sense eschatology is an account of the destiny that awaits each person after death. In the second, the cosmic or social sense, it is a description of a goal (telos)in which history will be fulfilled. This goal may be of either this-worldly or an other-worldly kind.

Owen goes on to note that it is possible to have one doctrine of eschatology without the other. His example is Plato who believed in immortality of the soul and judgment after death but did not believe in a purpose or end of history.

Certainly, the ancient Egyptians had an eschatology in the personal sense of the word. As noted in Chapter III, it is they who introduced the idea of post-mortem judgment to the world, including to Judaism and Christianity (Griffiths, 1991; Brandon, 1967). So in Owen's personal sense of eschatology as "an account of the destiny that awaits each person after death," Kemetic eschatology of judgment, justification and immortality is the paradigmatic eschatology.

Moreover, there are a few texts which attest to Kemetic eschatology of the second type, i.e., the cosmic sense of the world's end. The locus classicus of this conception is in the "Dialog between Atum and Osiris" in Chapter 175 of the Book of Coming Forth. The key passage in the text says:

> And I (Atum, the Creator is speaking) will destroy all that I have created and the earth will return to the primordial water, the Flood, as it was. I will remain alone with Osiris after having changed into other forms . . . .

This is clearly an end-of-world conception and although it is rare and not a radical apocalypticism as in Zoroastrianism or Christianity, it meets minimum criteria for an eschatological conception. Schott has made an important contribution to the collection of similar materials in his article "Altägyptische Vorstellung vom Weltende" (1929).

Secondly, the claim that the concept of Maat discouraged ancient Egyptian religion and ethics from developing a teleology does not seem to be supported by the literature. As is argued below, inherent in Maatian anthropology is a discourse which implicitly and explicitly expresses a teleology of human development. In fact, the very raison d'être of Maatian ethics is its role in providing a cognitive and affective grounds for the cultivation of the truly Maatian person. This certainly is the explicit educative thrust of the Sebait which teach the striving for moral excellence or perfection and human flourishing, in a word, well-being through well-doing.

Again, we have no definition of teleology as Tobin would have us see it, and we are not sure if he has something else in mind--although the category itself does not allow for an inordinate conceptual flexibility. If, however, we are using teleology to refer to ethical conduct

with purpose and related to an end or ends which it serves, then, Maatian ethics are teleological. This is evident in the Declarations of Innocence dedicated to justifying the right to immortality based on righteousness on earth. "I live on Maat," the risen petitioner says in the Hall of Judgment.

> I have done that which men and women request and that which pleases God. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one. Deliver me then . . .and let it be said to me 'Welcome, come in peace' by those who see me. (Coming Forth, Chapter 125)

Likewise, in the Declarations of Virtue, we have persons stating they have followed the path of life (*w3t nt 'nḫ*) which is the path of Maat and thus, the path of God to develop character, create and sustain the just and good society and achieve eternal life. And Khun-Anup's question to Rensi of "Will you be a man of eternity?" by your righteousness, reaffirms a fundamental belief in ancient Egypt that one must practice Maat as both ethical obligation of self and social development and the ontological need to reaffirm good (Maat) and dispel evil (isfet) in the world.

5.6.2 The Dynamic Character of Being

The claim that the Maatian view of reality is essentially one of a static universe is obviously open to challenge also. This appears to be more a conventional consensus among Egyptologists than a text-supported proposition (see Frankfort, 1961:49ff). In repeating and attempting to

further develop this argument, Allen (1988:25-26) argues that there are "two pairs of parallel concepts" in ancient Egyptian cosmology and ontology--"life and order, Eternal Recurrence and Eternal Sameness." He continues, saying "[b]oth pairs are aspects of a more fundamental set of principles that inform the ancient Egyptian world: stasis, the notion of creation as perfect and complete, and change the notion of life as dynamic and recurrent." However, there is nothing in the word, he uses, *wnn* (exist, existence), which suggests stasis especially as a philosophical concept.

Philosophically, existence can be dynamic or static and by his own argument, as life, it is dynamic and is marked by development and change (*ḫpr*). Moreover, his decision to translate *ḏt* as "eternal sameness" and *nḥḥ* as "eternal recurrence" in his interpretation of creation texts (CT 80) is an interpretive preference and differs from standard translations as everlastingness, eternity, eternal, forever, etc. Faulkner (1973:83) translates these same terms in the same passage as "everlasting" and "eternity". And the Wörterbuch notes that *nḥḥ* (II,299) and *ḏt* (V,507) appear to have the same meaning. It also says that when used together they mean "ewig und immerdar" (II, 301). Likewise, in the phrase "*r nḥḥ ḏt* a meaning is "bis in alle Ewigkeit." This does not mean that these two concepts cannot have extended meanings, but clearly these are the basic meanings. Thus, Allen has introduced an interpretive preference which

philosophically and definitionally requires more justification than is evident in his contentions. Also, there is a need for more textual evidence that the ancient Egyptians conceived life in this manner.

It should be said that Allen is an astute and intellectually sensitive interpreter of ancient Egyptian philosophy, as his text, Genesis in Egypt, demonstrates. But he has not proved his point in this case. However, the solution to the problem which plagues his interpretation lies in part of the argument he makes. He (1988:25) is correct to argue that Maat as order, i.e., "the arrangement and relationship that underlies and governs all aspects of existence" is "somewhat akin to the (European) notion of natural law." But he assumes too much when he takes a conceptual leap arguing that since the ancient Egyptian viewed Maat as immutable, "the created world is an eternally changeless construct in which every element and its function are forever the same."

First, there is no explicit evidence of this contention in the texts, and any attempt to draw an implicit conclusion requires a conceptual elasticity the categories and citations he uses cannot offer. It is well-known that ancient Egyptian words and categories are characterized by an impressive conceptual elasticity. But translating *ḏt* and *nḥḥ* as "eternal sameness" and "eternal recurrence" creates a burden of proof his argument cannot bear. What is required here is that he separate the analogy of Maat as

natural law from the less legitimate claim that this implies eternal sameness in the created world. Having done that, it becomes clear that logically, one can assume that the natural law of Maat is immutable without believing that the world it regulates is "forever the same." Moreover, law as the formulation and/or reflection of regularities in nature does not obviate or preclude change. It simply sets the boundaries in which change can occur.

Thus, Maat does not preclude change or a concept of change, it simply sets the boundaries for change. This essentially means that Maat, the ontological pillar of being, its ground and essence, does not change, but the world in which Maat remains preeminent does change. This, of course, will be conceded by some Egyptologists who would then go on to say that such change is simply cyclical change. The evidence offered for such a contention is that the order of the world was established at the first time (*sp tpy*) of creation and is constantly repeated (Allen, 1988; Morenz, 1984:166f). Morenz argues that the concept of doing things "as at the first time," (*mi sp tpy*) can have two basic meanings--either that of "a world eternally strong after the telos of perfection or else of periodicity as a continuum of repetitions of the creation." But the periodicity does not necessitate a continuum of repetitions in all things. Afterall, it is <u>like</u> the first time not the first time in continual extension.

Morenz, like Allen, Tobin, Frankfort, et al, also contends that the ancient Egyptians did not develop a teleology of a world striving ever upwards. The problem with such claims is that they are too broad and place several different contentions under the same rubric when they often belong elsewhere. For example, the analytical category of "eternal recurrence" contains not only contentions about time and events, but also as Tobin's argument demonstrates, contentions about ethical conceptions and conduct. Moreover, conceptions of repetitions in nature are equated with conceptions of repetitions in history. Although all of these are in various degree related, for categorical preciseness and analytical clarity they must at various levels of analysis be separated and united only when it contributes to a more incisive insight.

There is no disagreement that the ancient Egyptians posed the time of the first creation as the paradigmatic process and event of existence. Moreover, such a paradigm does indeed have ontological, religious, ethical, social and cosmic significance. There is also agreement here that the ancient Egyptians were constantly attempting to emulate it. Having stated this, the pivotal question becomes how did they pursue this emulation and how did this conception and process affect their ontology, ethics and sense of history? The question of history is not the subject of this paper and requires more development than we have either the space or

interest in pursuing. But suffice it to say, that in Kemetic theology there is no sense of society moving towards a point in history where history ends in a golden age or a new kingdom in the Christian sense. On the contrary, the primordial past is the paradigm, but a paradigm which is open-textured, for it does not define exactly how Maat, the indisputable task and goal, should express itself. There is, it seems to me, a concept of the need to strive for perfection as it was at the first time. But this is not so much to duplicate as to <u>emulate</u>. It is not to return to a golden age but to build a society <u>based on</u> the original Maatian model.

Morenz (1984:167) states that the creation of the world "is mentioned both as an act of the first time and as a beginning which by its very nature requires repetition if not completion." The obligation, again, is not to repeat but rather to emulate. Repetition in the above sense in which Morenz uses it implies changeless, cyclical movement but emulation suggests an open-textured field of concept and practice. Surely, Ptahhotep's teaching that one should "seek every excellent deed so that no fault will be found in your conduct," (86-87) is not covered conceptually by the category of repetition. It requires the category of emulation, emulation of the Creator who created the world "in the midst of his perfection" (CT 75). This striving for excellence or perfection as in the first time logically

carries within it the recognition of the non-perfected state of things. It thus suggests not only recognition of human imperfection, but also of imperfection in the world. Therefore, the prophecies of Neferti, Khakhepera-Soneb and Ipuwer, reveal both a knowledge and anticipation of evil and imperfection in the world, and it is the constant and continuous driving of this evil (isfet) out and establishing Maat in its place that frames the essential Maatian ethical task.

What I am arguing is that the narrow view of this ontological and ethical emulation of the first time (*sp tpy*) has led not only to an abundance of theoretical clumsiness with regard to analytical categories being unjustifiably conflated but also to a restrictive, perhaps even reductive, definition of the Kemetic view of the meaning and substance of ontological and ethical emulation. Thus, emulation involves not simply re-enactment of what has been done but actually going beyond what has been done. And the hub on which the completion of this task turns is the constant striving to be like Ra, in a word, to be like the Creator, in his perfection, in his power, in his knowledge, in his indomitable will and in his righteousness in word, in his Maatian character and conduct. It is clearly the conception of "re-enacting the first creation" that obscures the open texture and conceptual fruitfulness of the ideal of the first time, a paradigm of creative and ethical practice. To do Maat is

an open-ended project and task with no codified list of all things to be or do. On the contrary, the conceptual elasticity of Maat allows for a myriad of things to be done, in terms of modalities, i.e., create it, recreate it, sustain it.

Furthermore, to be like the Creator is first of all to be creative and this allows for initiative. In fact, the awesome creative achievements of the ancient Egyptians were not from blueprints by the Creator but conceived and carried out in the spirit of the Creator, i.e., acting like Ra. Thus, we do not have duplication but emulation. Even when a ruler or other agent says I have restored that which was in ruins, s/he often adds, as King Shabaka does, that he made it even "better than it had been before, in order that his name might endure and his monument last in the House of his father, Ptah . . .throughout eternity . . ." (Shabaka, 2). This thrust toward emulation, making things better and more beautiful than ever before, has often been dismissed as simply inflated claims. But viewed from the conceptual framework of the ontological and ethical obligation and task of emulation, they suggest a quest for progressive perfection. Thus, when Queen Hatshepsut states that she has done some-thing "beyond what the Two Lands have seen," i.e., built uniquely beautiful monuments to Amun-Ra, she realizes that one who hears it might say she boasts (Urk. IV:368. 3ff). But she asks that "one who hears it not say, 'It is

not a boast,' but rather say 'how like her it is, she is devcted to her father'." Therefore, the claim is an ethical one of filial piety, but contains within it a claim of superogation supportive of my contention that emulation of creation is not simply seen as duplication but can and does suggest ever higher achievement.

Bergman (1983:57) has raised a similar concern about the claim of a cyclical eternity for Kemet. He believes that several concepts and realities of Kemetic thought and practice challenge the concept of cyclical eternity. Among these are the concepts of second death (*mt m whm*), a frequently used term in both the Coffin Texts and the Book of Coming Forth by Day. Moreover, he lists other concepts which suggest "telos-directed processes." They include:

> . . .the bios as a career, the concept of an ideal age (110 years), the idea that the actual Pharaoh should not only copy the deeds of the forefathers but surpass them, a lot of interesting reflections in the so-called *Auseinandersetzungs-Literatur* originating after the fall of the Old Kingdom in the confrontation with the new structures in society, etc.

Certainly, these concepts tend to challenge the concept of cyclical eternity and the concept of eternal sameness and raise the question of varied conceptions of time and history.

Finally, the cyclical conception is challenged by the constant concern for restoration in Egyptian literature. A paradigmatic example of this is in the autobiography of

Rediu Khnum (Schenkel, 1965:112-115) who as part of his moral self-presentation says:

> I reorganized it so that its (work at Dendera) management was made better than before. I restored (*srwḏ*) what I found ruined; I raised up (*ṯs*) what I found worn out and I replenished (*mḥ*) what I found lacking.

Hornung (1989:93) has also recognized this constant concern for creative and restorative action. He asserts that

> [t]he Egyptians never abandoned the belief that the world can be changed in creative ways, that every negative or imperfect condition can be restored to its original state of perfection at the time of Creation. It is from this that the impressive energy of Egyptian culture derives and makes it stranger to all fatalism and passive acceptance of the status quo.

This commitment to constantly change things "in creative ways," and to improve the negative and imperfect, represents not a belief that the world is perfect, but that it is imperfect and must be improved.

Hornung (1989:88) also points to the Pharaonic concept of "extending the existent" as central to the Kemetic conception of possibility. He states that "since the First Intermediate Period the will of the Egyptian kings concerning 'extension of the existent' is expressly formulated." In this period, he notes, Kheti expresses the desire for a successor that would surpass him and "increase what I have achieved--*ir.n.f ḥ3w ḥr irt.n.i*" (Merikara, 90). This, he also notes, "is even today, four thousand years later a very unique formulated wish." Also King Senwosret III of the 12th Dynasty says, "I have increased what was passed down to

me--*iw rdi.n.i ḥ3w ḥr swḏt.n.i*" (Sethe, 1928:83). Even allowing for standard phrasing, the concept is nonetheless obvious and operative, i.e., to extend the existing.

Certainly, this concept of extending the existing has important ontological and anthropological implications. For it not only speaks to the malleability of the material of existence, but it also points to a Kemetic insistence on human intervention to extend the existence, to shape and make it better than before. It is this thrust that is recognized in the modern Maatian concept of progressive perfection.

In conclusion, then, being in Maatian ontology, is a structure and process of possibility, comprising opposites which offer a productive tension in an ongoing dynamic process. Maat, as the essence and ground of being, is, of necessity, immutable in its essential nature, but it is a principle of activeness in its role as an instrument of extending the existent and restoring the damaged and decaying, replenish the lacking, healing the injured, setting right the wrong. Maat is above all a constantly realized reality. This is both an ontological and anthropological assertion. Given the nature of reality which requires a cooperative and collaborative practice of the Divine and humans both against the negative and in the constant realization of Maat, reality or being can never be

static. By its very constitution and constant construction and reconstruction, it is a dynamic and open-ended project.

MAAT,

THE MORAL IDEAL IN ANCIENT EGYPT:

A STUDY IN CLASSICAL AFRICAN ETHICS"

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VI

MAATIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

Every ethics presupposes and contains a definite philosophical anthropology, i.e., a conception of the human person. The communitarian virtue ethics of the Dinka with its emphasis on _cieng_ presupposes a person capable of harmony as a social practice and as flourishing best in a context of harmony with God, nature and other humans (Deng, 1972). Likewise, Greek or Platonic and Aristotelian virtue ethics with its emphasis on biological and social _telos_ presupposes a person with such an ontological status and as flourishing best if attentive to one's role and status assigned by nature (Irwin, 1977; Rorty, 1980b). Maatian anthropology, in a similar manner, is presupposed and contained in ancient Egyptian ethics. It is an anthropology which evolves in the texts as a philosophical portrait of the king and later develops into a basic way of viewing humans in general (Ockinga, 1984; Hornung, 1967). This

chapter will offer a critical discussion of Maatian anthropology and its complex evolution from a philosophical portrait of the divine ruler to a moral anthropological understanding of the ordinary person.

The first outlines of Maatian anthropology appear in ancient Egypt's oldest literature, the Pyramid Texts, and continue in the other major sources of ancient Egyptian ethics and theology, i.e., the Book of Vindication, the Sebait, the Declarations of Virtue, the Book of Coming Forth By Day, and the moral narrative of Khun-Anup. It is important to recall that these early ethico-religious texts were written in a period of great, unequalled human achievement. As James Breasted (1934:44) suggests, such impressive achievement in the basic disciplines of human knowledge and in social construction had a profound effect on the human consciousness of ancient Egyptians, expanding human vision and the concept of human possibility.

Thus, the writings of the ancient Egyptians--ethico-religious and otherwise--reflect a conception of themselves which was both expansive and extremely self-confident. Their literature suggests that their level of achievement and the peaceful context in which they accomplished their work, was evidence of both divine favor (*ḥswt*) and a similarity to the divine (*mity R'*) in the sheer magnitude and majesty of their ability or power to create. It is, of course, this expansive concept of the human person, first

rooted in royal anthropological portraits which to many Egyptologists seemed both arrogant and starkly different from the view of humans in Judeo-Christian anthropology--even though there are points of similarity, as will be evidenced below.

A critical discussion of Maatian anthropology must recognize that the idea of and interest in philosophical anthropology are, like questions of ontology and theology, more implicit than explicit in the classical Maatian tradition. It is only in the neo-Maatian or renewed Maatian tradition that the explicit question of anthropology becomes central to moral discourse. What is required then is the construction of a conceptual apparatus, which enables one to remain faithful to the texts and the assumed intent of the authors, and yet critically search and sound the texts for implicit conceptual clues and grounds for an explicit Maatian anthropology.

As an interpretive strategy for explicating and understanding Maatian anthropology, I will discuss it in terms of several fundamental propositions in which it is grounded. These include: 1) the divine image of humans; 2) the perfectibility of humans; 3) the teachability of humans; 4) the free will of humans; and 5) the sociality of humans. Each proposition provides a conceptual pillar in the overall moral anthropology and thus, a critical framework for its delineation and discussion.

6.2 The Divine Image of Humans

6.2.1 Pharaonic Divinity

The Maatian conception of the human person begins with the proposition that humans are the images of God (*snnw nṯr*) (Ockinga, 1984). Although the bulk of the literature expressing this concept emanates from royal anthropological conceptions which are attested to as early as the Old Kingdom, the category *snn nṯr* itself evolves as a generalized anthropological understanding of all humans in the First Intermediate Period (2135-2040B.C.E.) in the Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara. In this Sebait, Kheti asserts that humans are the images of God (*snnw nṯr*) (132). Still, it is in royal literature that the divine character of the human person is first developed. It begins first with the concept of the king and queen as both the son and daughter of God and a god himself or herself. And it evolves by the time of the New Kingdom into a list of categories signifying both image and essence of God.

The concept of the divine image of humans, then, has intellectual roots in the concept of pharaonic divinity. In the oldest literature which expresses this concept, the Pyramid Texts, the king is divine as both the son of God, Ra, and the embodiment of the divinity Horus. However, there is much debate on the exact nature of the pharaoh's divinity. Georges Posener's (1960) work on this issue requested a balanced view of the king's divine and human

qualities. He argued that even the word *n<u>t</u>r*, divinity, god, etc., and phrases in which it is used suggest a variety of status positions and that one can even interpret divine names such as Horus and Ra metaphorically rather than literally. Moreover, he (1960:23-25) cites the extent of the king's dependence on divinities and indicates later the stress on his human heroic deeds rather than supernatural ones.

Goedicke (1960) studying non-religious literature in the Old Kingdom, tended to support Posener's admonition against overemphasis on the divine nature of kings at the expense of human nature. Making a distinction between the *nyst* or kingship which was divine and the *nsw* or king which was not, Goedicke (1960:90) argues that the king is more usefully seen as a mediator between the divine and the human, and the representative of Maat, i.e., justice and order in the world. The term which has definitive meaning for him is "*ḥm*" (servant), which was posited above by Posener, and reveals for them both the human character of the king as well as his moral posture and obligation.

Elke Blumenthal (1970), on the other hand finds abundant evidence in the Middle Kingdom of the king's divinity. The king's designation as a *n<u>t</u>r* or divine presence, his identification with various *n<u>t</u>r* and the formulaic phrase that affirms his ability to *ir mi n<u>t</u>r*, i.e., act like a divinity, all attest to his divine character (Blumenthal,

1970:96-99). She (1970:432ff) also affirms the king's role as the upholder of Maat in both a moral and cosmic sense and notes that doing of Maat by the king, as attested in the Book of Kheti for Merikara, links upright conduct and long life. The phrase cited is the instruction to "Do Maat that you may endure on earth" (*ir m3ʿt w3ḥ.k tp t3*). The significance of this is that it reaffirms that not only are persons in general held to the moral standard of Maat but also the king or sovereign.

Finally, Winfred Barta (1981), focusing on the study of divine kingship in the Early or Archaic Period and the Old Kingdom develops a distinction between the concept of pharaonic divinity ('Gottlichkeit') and pharaonic similarity to divinity ('Gottänhlichkeit'). For him the use of "*mi*" or like God and "*twt*" in the image of God, point to "similarity" and "association" with the divinity, not equation. The phrase "granted life, health and prosperity like Ra forever" also tends to support this contention according to Barta. This association theory, of course, runs into problems with the identification with Horus which requires incarnation rather than simply association.

As Frankfort (1948b:123-139) explained, the act of succession and coronation of Horus and in this role the sovereign transcends the human and incarnates the divine as Horus. Moreover, he becomes associated here with the creator divinities who established order out of chaos. It

is in this role that the ethical and cosmic function of the king is expressed in his offering Maat (*ḥnk M3't*) to the Divinity (Teeter, 1990). And it is also here that the concept of restoration as both an ethical and cosmic practice becomes central. It is in this complex and varied conception of pharaonic divinity, established in the Old Kingdom, that the many categories and conceptions of the royal ruler as image of God evolve.

As noted above, the concept of the king as the divine image (*twt*) of God emerges in the 13th Dynasty circa 1786-1633 (Ockinga, 1984:7; Goedicke, 1993; Hornung, 1967). Evidence of this appears on the stela of King Neferhotep III in his designation of "*twt 'nḫ R'*, the living image of Ra" (Helck, 1975:42,15). In his important study on humans as the image of God, Ockinga (1984) uses temple inscriptions, autobiographies, instructions, hymns and prayers to elucidate this central anthropological concept in ancient Egypt. He cites a group of words essentially used for the king as the con-crete image of God, representing him on earth and acting like him in various ways. These words are *twtw, ḫnti, šsp* and *sšmw*. In contrast to the above words, he (1984:128) states that, the words *snn, mity* or *mitt* and *tit* depict the king not as a concrete image of God, but rather a "Gottähnlichkeit" or similarity to God in essence and action often through use of a metaphor.

Thus, Seti I is called "*nṯr nfr mitt R' s'nḫ t3wy m [stwt.f]*--the good god, the image of Ra who caused the Two Lands to live through his rays" (KRI I:199.4). Thutmose III is called "*twt.f (R') tp t3*--the image of (Ra) on earth" (Urk. IV:534.1). And King Taharqa's sister, Shepenwepet, is described in a Karnak text as the image (*tit*) of Ra (Williams, 1972a:20). Other examples of the many textual passages which affirm this divine likeness are:

1) *ḫnti 'nḫ n R', nb ḫ'w*
   living image of Ra, lord of crowns

2) *twt n 'Imn ḏs.f*
   the image of Amun himself

3) *twt 'nḫ tp t3 (Atum)*
   the living image (of Atum) on earth
   (KRI II:711.4, 324.7, 356.9)

It is the terms *snn, mitt* and *tit*, which also refer to persons in general and indicate also by metaphor a close resemblance to God in act and essence, as Ockinga argues. Hornung (1982:134) also makes this point in his contention that this doctrine, which at first is simply a portrait of the king, becomes a general anthropological conception.

6.2.2 Divine Filiation

This evolved paradigmatic conception of the human person is rooted in several basic tenets about the nature and role of the reigning king or queen. And again it is important to note that although the category *snn nṯr* precedes that of royal image-of-God categories, it is nevertheless conceptions of the royal person that offer

critical grounding for a developed anthropological conception of the ordinary person. The first of these conceptions is divine filiation, i.e., the identity and status of the king as the son of God (*s3 n R'*). This concept emerges in the Fourth Dynasty and is maintained throughout ancient Egyptian history. This and other grounds of royal divinity are treated definitively and at length by Frankfort (1948b) in his important work, Kingship and the Gods. Here he discusses evidences and expressions of royal divinity in the titulary, the rites of coronation in which the sovereign rises in glory (*ḫ'i*) like Ra, the spiritual union of the sovereign's mother and the Divinity, and the process of renewal through the Sed festival. Frankfort correctly draws an important contrast between the Mesopotamian conception of kingship without divine status and the Egyptian tradition which finds parallels and sources in other ancient African cultures (Frankfort, 1948b:24ff; Rice, 1990:221). As Frankfort (1948b:42) contends, the divine sonship of the king expresses a relationship of intimacy, dependency and piety. But it also implied and required a relationship of obligation as is argued below. For to be like Ra (*mi R'*) is not only in image but also in action.

Although it is in the Pyramid Texts that we have the oldest concept of divine filiation, the concept lasts throughout the Late Period. This is evidenced in King Piankhi's reaffirmation of divine filiation in his description

of his divine birth. He says, "When I was fashioned in the womb and created in the divine egg, the seed of God was in me" (Urk. III:22.69). But it is in the New Kingdom that this concept reaches its most defined state in discourse concerning the doctrine of theogamy in which the Divinity engages in spiritual union with the sovereign's mother. It is this union with which Hellmut Brunner in his Die Geburt des Gottkönigs (1964) has compared the later Christian doctrine of incarnation. In the Pyramid Texts, however, the concept of coming from the body of the Divinity is clearly expressed in King Unas' claim of worthiness to be received by the Divinity after death, resurrection and ascension. In this text, Unas declares as part of his claim to worthiness not only that he has done Maat, but also that he is the son of Ra. "Ra-Atum your son comes to you," he says, "Unas comes to you. Raise him to you. Hold him in your arms. He is your son of your body forever" (PT 160).

Divine filiation and representation are applied to both king and queen, and Queen Hatshepsut uses both son (*s3*) and daughter (*s3t*) interchangeably to refer to her divine filiation with Amun Ra. On one of her magnificent obelisks at the Temple of Amun at Karnak she says it was "made for him by the son of Ra, Hatshepsut Khenemet-Amun," but on the same obelisk text she says she is:

> the daughter of Amen-Ra, his beloved, his unique one who came from him; effective image (*tit 3ht*) of the Lord-of-all . . .whom he chose as guardian

> of Egypt, as protector of (both) the nobles and the masses . . .who Ra begot so as to have effective offspring on earth for the well-being of humankind. (Urk. IV:361.6ff)

It is this concept of being a living (*'nḫ*), and effective (*3ḫ*) image (*tit*) of God, of being responsible to God, and being supported by him in one's righteousness that is summed up in this autobiographical portrait.

In the same conceptual framework of *tit ntr* or imago dei and divine filiation, Thutmosis III says, "I am the son of Amun Ra" and again, "I am his son, issued from him, an image fashioned in resemblance to the one who presides over Heseret, i.e., Djehuti" (Laloulette, 1984:37). And Amun responds saying, "I am (indeed) your father," "I know that you are my son. You are my son and my protector," i.e., protector of Maat, his divine order. This joining of sources of divine image of both Amun and Djehuti (Thoth) as Thutmosis did above is both a reflection of Thutmosis' name which means "Born of Thoth" and perhaps a theological conception that all the divine powers are manifestations of Amun who is "rich in manifestations" (see Hornung, 1982: Chapter 4). Even in the Late Period and beyond, we continually encounter this conception of divine affiliation and commitment to his will through the Late Period. Thus, the son of Ra, King Tanutamun was one whose "heart was happy when he saw his father Amun-Ra" in his temple at Napata (Urk. III:63.10--64.1).

6.2.3 Shared Essence

A second conceptual pillar in the evolution of the concept of the royal ruler as an image of God is the shared essence of ruler and the Divinity. This concept evolves both as an ontological principle in the creation narrative discussed in chapter Five and the doctrine of divine affiliation. As Allen (1988:30) points out, the Creator is both the efficient and "material cause of creation: the world has evolved from his essence." The Creator's description of this in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus (13, 21-22), as noted above, is that he "broadened out" in the world for his being and became being (*ḫprw*), itself. This is also expressed as above in the passage of the Shabaka Text (53) which says, "Through the heart and tongue, something developed in Atum's image." Moreover, this becomes another way of discussing the basic motif in Maatian ontology of the unity of being which as noted above is informed by concepts of the continuity of being and the shared essence of being.

The concept of shared essence is further reaffirmed and augmented by the concept of the transmission of ka which is, as Faulkner notes, a transmission of essence or "divine nature" (Pyr. 1652; Faulkner, 1969:246, 247 n.2; Allen, 1988: 69n.85). At this conceptual juncture, essence and image overlap and interlock to produce a thick concept of "divine likeness." In this regard, the King is seen and spoken of as the embodiment of God, often metaphorically in

his attributes and action but also in his essence. This is the case of Ramesses II who was characterized as:

> *R' n t3 'Itm 'nḫ n Kmt*
> *mniw n.i rḫyt wbn.f 'nḫ ib.sn*
>
> Ra of the land, living Atum of Kemet
> Shepherd of the people; when he rises,
> their hearts live (KRI II:311.6-7).

Thus, as Hornung (1982:140) states, in such a conceptual framework "the boundaries between likeness, comparison and identification become blurred to us and a manifestation 'like Ra' becomes imperceptibly a manifestation 'as Ra'."

The concept of image and essence merging is also further expressed in the following textual passages. First, Huy, viceroy of Kush, says to King Tutankhamun, "*ntk R' tit.k tit.f*--You are Ra, your image/essence is his image/ essence" (Urk. IV:2069.16). Also to Ramesses II it is said, "*ntk R' ḏt.k ḏt.f*--your person is his person" (KRI II:329. 3). And finally, the Prime Minister Pahesi says, "*ntk R' tw.k mi ḳd.f ki.k ki.f*-- You are Ra; you are of his nature. Your essence is his essence" (KRI IV:89.7). Thus, *tit, ḏt, kd,* and *ki* are used to indicate both image and essence (Wb V. 505.c; 76.B; and 16.11a). And as Ockinga (1984:115) notes, "Die Ebenbildlickheit, die durch tit ausgedrückt wird, ist also ein Wesensahlichkeit."

Image and essence are most definitely merged in the context and process of Maatian action. It is in acting like God that the royal ruler not only appears as God (*ḫ'*) but also expresses his/her divinity. Thus, Amun speaks to

Amenhotep III, telling him to rule like him and for him. The text says:

> ir.n(.i) t3 pn m 3w.f wsḫ.f
> r irt mrwt k3.i
> \- - - - - - - -
> nsyt.k sw mi wn.i m niswt bity
> b3k.k n.i sw m ib mrr.i
> ntk s3.i mry pr m ḥ'w
> ẖnti.i n.i tp t3
> di.n.i ḥḳ3.k t3 m ḥtp
>
> I have created this land in its length
> and breadth to do as my ka wishes
> \- - - - - - - -
> You will rule it as King as if I was king
> of Upper and Lower Egypt.
> You shall administer it for me with a
> loving heart.
> For you are my beloved son who came
> forth from my body.
> My image who I have established on earth
> Thus, I have caused you to rule in peace
> on earth (Urk. IV:1675.15ff; 1676:1-4).

Thus, ruling like God is acting like God. And as the texts constantly reaffirms, Maat is the central principle which defines both the will and way of God.

6.2.4 *Irt mi R'* (Imitatio Dei)

The concept of the merger of image and essence, then, is most definitively grounded in and expressed by the imitation of God in Maatian action (*irt mi R'*). Thus, in addition the divine image of the king as son by nature is the concept of the king as son by deed. This concept is inherent in Hatshepsut's statement that she is the effective image (*tit 3ht*) of the Lord of the Universe" and one who was chosen to lead Egypt and protect the people (Urk. IV:361.17-362.1). As noted above, her contention then is that "Ra created

(literally begot) (her) so as to have an effective offspring on earth for the well being of humankind" (Urk. IV:362.4-5).

Both Friedman (1986, 1985) and Englund (1978) have done important work on the meaning of "*3ḫ*" and demonstrate that like many Kemetic concepts, it is polysemic and thus open to various insights and uses. Here, however, I wish to concentrate on its meaning as effectiveness. For the ideal leader is an effective one, effective for her father Ra who demands and lives on righteousness. It is in being effective for Ra that one becomes like Ra. As Friedman (1986:101) notes, creator and creation merge in Egyptian thinking . . .through the vehicle of *3ḫ*" or in another sense through *3ḫw* (effectiveness). The first (*3ḫ*) is a glorious spirit, but *3ḫw* is concrete, moral or rather ethico-religious action that reflects "the partnership of God and man which is brought to fruition in Egyptian religion" (Hornung, 1982:215). The partnership is one in maintaining, creating and restoring Maat. Thus, the royal ruler is protector of God through "being protector of the nobles and masses" and insuring "the welfare of humankind," as Hatshepsut says.

The royal ruler then is regent of Ra, ruling society and indeed the world in the age of empire in the New Kingdom, claiming his realm was "all the sun encircles" in imitation of Ra ruling the universe. The key again here is the effective deed in and for Maat. For both Ra and ruler live in and through Maat. As Tobin (1989:45) states, even

in the Amarna texts we find "that the king is one who lives in truth (*'nḫ m m3't*), indicating his inseparable connection with the function of order and justice." Moreover, Kitchen (1987) points out how the titularies of the Ramessid king were "an expression of their ideal kingship" based <u>on</u> and <u>in</u> Maat. Among these titularies reflecting the ideal conception of kingship which is rooted in Maat are: Thutmosis I, *k3 nḫt mry M3't* (Strong Bull, Beloved of Maat); Ramesses I, *wsr M3't R'* (Great is the Maat of Ra); Seti I, *mn M3't R'* (Established is the Maat of Ra); Merenptah, *k3 nḫt h'i m M3't* (Strong Bull, Rejoicing in Maat); and Siptah, *dit M3't n R' m ẖrt hrw* (Offering Maat to Ra Daily).

As Bryce (1979) and Tobin (1989) note, this is the ideal of sacral kingship. Tobin (1989:247) argues that in both ancient Egypt and ancient Israel, with ancient Egypt having served as a model, "The king was a sacral figure, the son of a deity, the agent of justice, mediator of prosperity and universal ruler, in short, a messianic ruler." As noted above, Breasted (1934:202) had early pointed to the messianic character of Kemetic kingship, citing the ethical model in the Prophecy of Neferti as an example of this ideal. To save Kemet from its desolation and disorder, the text says, a king shall come from the South and set Maat in its place. Having prophesied how this king will suppress the wicked and rebellious, defeat the Asiatics and Libyans and ban the Asiatics and have them beg for water for their cattle at the

borders, Neferti closed with the classic statement of acting like Ra (*irt mi R'*): "Then Maat (truth, justice, order) will return to its place and isfet (falsehood, injustice and chaos) will be driven away."

Bryce (1979:202) has noted that "(i)n sacral kingship, the religious and the political ideology become one. Mediation of the will of the deity was conceived through the established religious structures of kingship" and in turn the "religious personnel were organized under the king." It would be easy to designate this as simply "royal propaganda," both in ancient Egypt and ancient Israel. For it was clearly also used to legitimate the established order. It is a practice all governments use to strengthen their rule. But even this process of legitimation can be an expression also of the genuine desire to serve God, do justice and contribute to "strengthening the divine order embodied in the royal government" (Bryce, 1979:202).

Ancient Egypt, like all societies, had contradictions between ideal and practice, between claims and achievements. But this does not preclude genuineness of commitment to a moral standard in spite of moral failure. As Anthes (1959) contends, in spite of the unity of theology and government, the ideal and practice did not allow unlimited and unchecked power to the pharaoh. Furthermore, Badawy (1967) writing on the civic virtue of the pharaoh, states that it is not accurate to portray the king as a "hieratic ruler" aloof and

disinterested in the welfare of the people. In fact, he (1967:103) writes, "there is abundant evidence about the actual contribution of the pharaoh to his people sometimes even through personal initiative" rather than indirectly through officials.

Moreover, Posener (1960) notes that worship by the pharaoh was essentially one of service. In fact, he (1960: 31) notes that during the New Kingdom, "il n'est pas rare que le monarque soit appelé 'le serviteur' du dieu" in the texts. Thus, "in a prayer to Amon, Ramesses III says concerning his descendants who will follow him on the throne: 'they are servants for you, keeping their eyes fixed on you and doing that which is effective and of value (*3ḫ*) for your ka forever and ever'." There is, of course, abundant evidence throughout Kemetic history to attest to pharaoh's ideal self-conception of being a servant of God in a serious ethical and spiritual sense and of feeling s/he was acting on his orders. This extends from the royal rulers' claim in the Pyramid Texts to being "just before heaven and earth" through and beyond the reign of Piankhi, an obviously devout ruler, who declares "I have done nothing without him (Amun-Ra), it is he who has ordered me to act" (Urk. III:22.69).

It is important to note here that the declarations of morally correct behavior and divine filiation are not separate claims to worthiness. On the contrary, these

declarations are complements of the same claim of worthiness which are grounded in the multidimensional concept of Maat. Unas is not only son of Ra, of his very body by the concept of divine filiation but also because he is able to claim spiritual purity and moral innocence. This same claim of righteous behavior, even divinely inspired behavior is made also by Piankhi in the above cited text. Along with his claim of divine filiation is the claim and commitment that "By his ka (the Divinity)," he does nothing nor will do anything which the Divinity does not command and inspire.

Developing this link between divine status and the ethical obligation to honor it, Unas also claims innocence of having done any injury to any human, beast or bird. "Unas has come to his shore," he declares, "as a divine one (*nṯr*) comes to his shore," i.e., in righteousness (*M3't*) and resultant power (*sḫmt*). This righteousness and power combined is called effectiveness (*3ḫwt*). An effectiveness based on his ability to claim truthfully he has no accusers, human, animal or bird (PT 386-387).

This ability, then, to claim that neither the living nor dead, bird nor beast has a legitimate claim against him, can be justifiably interpreted as the true test of his sonship of Ra. For to be other than that would be to violate his very nature and betray his role as divine and righteous ruler and representative of God on earth. This was the ideal and there is literature which shows that when

a ruler violated this ideal, he was challenged to stand up and act in accordance with Maat. The Books of Neferti, Ipuwer and Khakherperre-soneb and the Book of Khun-Anup (The Eloquent Peasant) are examples of this.

The model for the righteous ruler who acted like Ra was the good Shepherd (*mniw nfr*) (Breasted, 1934:198; Müller, 1961). For indeed Ra was the Good Shepherd as praise hymns speak of him. One says of him:

> O Amen Ra, you shepherd who cares for your flock in the early morning, and leads the hungry to pasture. As the shepherd leads the flock to green meadows, Amun so do you lead me the hungry one to food. For Amun is indeed a shepherd, a shepherd who is not neglectful. (Gardiner and Cerny, 1957:Vol. I, pl.89)

In addition to being described as the Good Shepherd, Ra is also called "Great Shepherd--*Minw '3*" and "Beloved Shepherd--*Minw Mryty*" (Müller, 1961: 140). It is this model of attentiveness, protectiveness and loving care that the Kemetic king seeks to emulate. Technically, Ra is the Good Herdsman (*mniw nfr*) rather than "Good Shepherd" and humans are the noble herd *'wt spst*). For *Minw* actually means herdsman, i.e., keeper and protector of cattle rather than of sheep. But given the religious idiom in English "shepherd" and "flock" are connotatively more equivalent than "herdsman" and "herd."

The emulation of Ra as the Good Shepherd by kings and queens is quite evident in the literature. Thus, Sesostris I says of Ra:

ir.n.f wi r mniw t3 pn
rḫ.n.f s3ḳ.n.f sw

He appointed me shepherd of this land
Knowing who would hold it together for
him. (El Adly, 1984)

Likewise, Amenhotep II says:

in it.i wḏ ir.i st,
'Imn ḳm3 nfrw(.i)
ir.n.f wi r mniw t3 tp
rḫ.n.f ḫrp.i n.f sw (Urk. IV:1326-1327).

It was my father who commanded that I
do it.
Amen who created my goodness.
He appointed me as shepherd of this land.
Knowing I would rule it for him.

Finally, Hatshepsut describes herself as:

sḫ't.n 'Imn ds.f ḥr nst.f
m Iwnw sm3w
stp.n.f r mniw Kmt
r nr p't rḫyt

One whom Amun himself caused to appear
in glory on his throne in Thebes
Whom he chose to be shepherd of Kemet
And protector of the nobles and the masses.
(Urk. IV:361.16--362.1)

This concept of chosenness of king, queen and Kemet pervades the literature and in turn becomes a model for the rulers in general (Müller, 1961:133).

It becomes clear here that there is evidence of both a human and divine nature of the pharaoh. Moreover, it seems supportable to argue that the divinity of the pharaoh is as Posener and Barta argued, more "like the divine" rather than an embodiment of the divine, especially in his person. Thus, as for the evolved concept of human in the image of the divine, it is more image than essence, although as posited

above, with the creation narrative and the concept of transmission of ka, this too does not appear to be a dichotomous division. Furthermore, what is key here for Maatian anthropology and therefore Maatian ethics is the "acting like God," for it is in practice that the divine image is both delineated and proved.

6.2.5 *Snn Nṯr* (Imago Dei)

As noted above, the *snn nṯr* concept both as a general anthropological understanding and as a distinct term emerges in the First Intermediate Period (2135-2040 B.C.E.). Although the philosophical portrait of the king suggested this and provided supportive concepts, the term was not used to describe the royal ruler until the Middle Kingdom in the 13th Dynasty. This concept is important in several ways. First, it is an inclusive concept without regard to distinctions of nationality, class or gender. Secondly, it is the oldest expression of this concept in world literature. Thirdly, it is important in that it precedes royal imago dei categories (*twt, ẖnt, šsp, sšmw*) which do not appear until the Thirteenth Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom. Fourthly, the *snn nṯr* concept is the spiritual and ethical grounding for concepts of the sacredness of life, human dignity and human moral responsibility for Maatian practice. In a word, it is at the center of the Maatian understanding of what it means to be human.

The locus classicus of this concept is found in the Instructions for Merikara by King Kheti (Golenischeff, 1916: pl. ix-xiv; Volten, 1945:3-81). In the closing section of the text in a praise hymn to Ra, Kheti defines humans as the images (*snnw*) of God. He says:

> *hn rmṯ 'wt nt Nṯr*
> *ir.n.f pt t3 n ib.sn*
> *dr.n.f snk n mw*
> *ir.n.f ṯ3w n 'nḫ fnḏ.sn*
> *snnw.f pw prw m ḥ'w.f* (Merikara, 130-132)

> Well-cared for is humankind who are
> the flocks of God.
> He made the sky and earth for their sakes.
> He destroyed the dangers of the water
> (for them).
> He gave the breath of life for their noses.
> They are his images and came from his body.
> (emphasis mine)

Here Kheti not only introduces the concept of snn nṯr, but speaks of the loving care and consideration God grants to those in his image.

Kheti goes on to identify humans as the children (msw) of God and enumerates more of the gifts of life and living God has given humans on earth and in the heavens. When Kheti makes the statement, "*snnw.f pw prw m ḥ'w.f* (They are his images and come from his body [or flesh])," he conceptually links the ideas of image and filiation as in royal theology (Ockinga, 1984:52ff). As Hornung (1967:136) argues, "Was also sonst königliches Privileg ist, das Hervorgehen aus dem Leib Gottes und damit ein Sohnesverhältnis zu ihm, wird hier allen Menschen zugeschrieben." Thus humans are divine images as children of the divine, issues of the

divinity himself and this, as with kings before, imposes an obligation of Maatian action.

At this point, practice and image form a generative nexus and one is defined as godlike in his/her action. This generative nexus is clearly attested to by passages in both the Book of Ani and the Book of Amenomope, Sebait written in the New Kingdom. In Ani, the attribute and practice of listening is defined as that which makes humans images of God (snnw n nṯr). Khonsuhotep says to his father:

> *ir rmṯw snnw n nṯr*
> *(ḥr) p3y.sn nt-'w n sḏm s ḥr wsb.f*
> *nn rḫ w'w snnw.f ḫpr 'š3t ṁ wnḏw nb*
> *nn rḫ w'w sb3yt.f ḫpr.i w' ḥr ḥ3ty*
> *iw p3 'ḥ'w nb ḫny*

> People are the likeness of God
> if they are accustomed to listening to a
> man's answer
> One cannot know his fellow if the multitudes
> are all cattle
> One cannot know his teachings and alone possess
> a mind
> if the masses are all foolish. (Ani, X:8-10)

It is important to note that Khonsuhotep maintains that not only is one godlike through wisdom (*rḫ*) which is a traditional view in ancient Egyptian anthropology, but all humans are like God by listening to others (Ockinga, 1984:87). This is an expression of the capacity for ethical sensitivity and what Assmann (1990: 69ff) calls "communicative solidarity." Finally, Amenomope says that "the strength of one who resembles him (God) saves the wretched from oppression" (21:7-8). To be like God, then, i.e., *mi ḳd.f*, is to

have his character, nature, and that requires ethical thought, emotion, speech and action.

The concept of *snn nṯr* or imago dei is also expressed in claims of persons in their autobiographies that they were like God "*mity nṯr*" in their Maatian actions. These moral self-definitions appear first in the First Intermediate Period and show both diversity and consistency (Ockinga, 1984:82ff). The steward Hennen says he was "*ḏd ḫprw mity Nṯr 'ḏ ḥr r Ḏhwty*--one who speaks and it happens, one like God, who is perceptive as Thoth" (Schenkel, 1965:426). And the prime minister, Montuhotep associates his character and abilities with that of the divine power, Djehuti, arguing "exactness (*'ḳ3*) like the weights and being patient in hearing petitions (*w3ḥ-ib r sḏm mdwt*)." Finally he says, he is "like God in his service--*mity nṯr m wnwt*" (CG 20539 Ib, 5ff). This stress on service (*wnwt*) as the ground for being *mity nṯr* or like God is, of course, central to Maatian anthropology, as cited in the discussion of the king as a servant of God and the people.

Other examples of the definition of Godliness as virtuous action are attested to in autobiographical literature. Djedkhonsefankh says that "one said of me: The seed of his father, who his mother bore as a god." Moreover, after listing his good deeds for the people, he says, "I was thus a god for them" (Janssen, 1955:127,5; 129,12). The prophet of Amen, Hor of the 22nd Dynasty makes a similar moral claim

saying, "I was a god for my family . . .for I created (?) Maat on earth" (Otto, 1954:148). The link between godliness and action is also clear in the moral self-presentation of Teos II, governor of Tanis, in the Late Period. He says he is:

> . . .Maat through his purity, Horus through his protection. In-mutef in his cleanliness . . . one who guided the affairs of his city, who distributes the taxes in his district, who gave his city water when there was drought in Egypt, who nourished the hungry in his district . . .and . . .who did what was loved. (Otto, 1954:186-187)

Thus, it is in his moral purity and moral action that Teos claims emulation and indeed embodiment of the Divinity.

This godliness in thought and practice is often framed in the context of acting as a dutiful son does for his father. As noted above, it is in keeping with the obligation of being like God that pharaonic literature constantly asserts that the pharaoh has acted for the Divinity as a dutiful son or daughter does for his or her father out of love, command or inspiration. Thus, we have Hatshepsut's assertion above that she has acted as a pious and effective daughter acts for her father (Urk. IV:361ff). And Sesostris I says of the Divinity: "He begot me to do what should be done for him to accomplish what he commands to do" (El Adly, 1984:7.I, 16-17; pBerlin 3029). Likewise, Ramesses III says to the Divinity: "I have travelled on your road and I have returned on your order. All your plans have been carried out" (Breasted, 1905 IV:128).

Finally, this relationship of love and obligation is a reciprocal one. Thus Sesostris I says, "I excel by acting for my maker, pleasing God with what he gave" (El-Adly, 1984:7.I, 38-39). This implies, and indeed reflects, a reciprocal response to a good given and an obligation incurred. Moreover, as Posener (1960:35) notes, the service which the king owes the Divinity is an obligation of kingship and is both "l'object et la condition du pouvoir qu'il détient." And if the obligation is not met, negative consequences are to be expected. In Kheti's instruction for Merikara one reads that one should "serve God and he will act for you likewise--*ir n Nṯr ir.f n.k mitt*" (Merikara, 129). For "God is aware of one who acts for him--*sšs3 Nṯr m irr n.f*" (Merikara, 130). And in serving God, that is to say by doing Maat, one ensures one's place in the Otherworld (Merikara, 127-129). Here reciprocity is framed both in terms of God's return for service and the reward of afterlife by doing Maat. Although serving God is in fact doing Maat, there is a perceptible intention to place emphasis on service as a reciprocal good in addition to uprightness and doing Maat as the ground of a secure place in the afterlife.

Furthermore, the reciprocity of the Divinity is evidence again in Ramesses II's to Amun Re on the battlefield of Kadesh. Feeling abandoned, he addresses Amun saying: "What is this, father Amun? Is it right for a father to ignore his son? Are my deeds a matter for you to ignore?

Do I not walk and stand at your word? I have not neglected an order you gave" (KRI II:34.92-94). Continuing, he draws a line between himself, the dutiful son and his opponents, the Asiatics, whom he calls "wretches ignorant of God" (KRI II:35.97). After giving a lengthy account of what he considers dutiful acts, he appeals to Amun to reciprocate saying, "Shall it be said 'The gain is small for him who entrusts himself to your will?' Do good to him who counts on you, then one will serve you with a loving heart." Amun, as the narrative develops, hears the appeal, assures Ramesses he is indeed his father and is with him and ultimately gives him strength for victory.

In her Speos Artemidos Inscription, Queen Hatshepsut also draws this line of demarcation between the dutiful offspring, in this case, the daughter, and the Hyksos "who ruled without Ra" (Urk. IV:390.9). She thus reaffirms the difference in her rule in spiritual and ethical terms and reaffirms her commitment to restore (*srwḏ*) that which was damaged (*w3si*) and raise up (*ṯsi*) that which was in ruins (*stp*) (Urk. IV:390.5-6). This claim is not only to reaffirm the ethico-political legitimacy of her own rule, but expresses also the standard by which she claims such legitimacy, i.e., acting with Ra, as he commands, restoring and doing Maat.

In conclusion, then, being in the divine image of God, *snn nṯr*, requires acts in imitation of God, imitatio dei or

irt mi nṯr. And one does this as a pious and effective daughter does for her father--*m ir s3t n it s*, says Hatshepsut (Randall-MacIver et al, 1911:71). The key virtues are filial piety and reciprocity or rather filial piety which expresses itself in a reciprocity of appreciation and emulation. From this vision of the royal ruler in the image and emulation of God, there is, as noted above, an evolution which expands the concept to include all. Of course, there is never any equality of king and ordinary person, but in the process of what is called in Egyptology "the democratization of religious beliefs," after the Old Kingdom, certain ideas and royal prerogatives are appropriated by ordinary persons.

Certainly, the classical reference for this father-son relationship in non-royal literature is Ptahhotep (197-215). The depiction includes description of both the dutiful and negligent son. The dutiful son is one who is upright (*mtr*), emulates (*pẖr*) his father's character (*ḳd*), listens to and obeys (*sḏm*) his father's teachings (*sb3yt*) and takes care (*siḳr*) of his father's possessions. In a word, he is a hearer (*sḏm*) and doer (*ir*) of Maat. His opposite is obviously one who acts to the contrary and will be covered below under the section on the teachability of humans. It is here that one also reaffirms the link between image and filiation in the Instructions of Sehotepibra through a standard admonition of a father to son: "*sni ḳd.i m wni*

mdwt.i--emulate my character; do not neglect my words" (Posener, 1976:99). The stress is placed here on "*sni*," to emulate and "*snn*," image and the conceptual link between becoming and being an image (*snn*) of God or father by emulating (*sni*) him in character, i.e., spiritual and ethical practice. Doing Maat, then, is the generative process by which image, essence and affiliation are grounded and expressed. It is thus both a spiritual and ethical act which builds not only the person, but as shown above, also maintains the world. Another way to express this ethical and spiritual action is as an offering of Maat. In addition to the social practice of Maat, the offering of Maat is also a ritual action. Such an act was the ritual counterpart of social practice and suggested a commitment by the ruler to Maatian social practice. Mysliwiec (1985:9) inteprets the ritual as essentially "political propaganda." But as Teeter (1990: 271) argues, it is more useful to reject "the deliberate deception associated with the category" in modern times. For in fact it was a religious act, "a visible affirmation of the king's ability to rule in accordance with the traditions of statecraft which were associated with religious concepts embodied in Maat." As Teeter (1990:245) notes, Maat as the archetypal offering, subsumes all others under it as evidenced in the Papyrus Berlin 3055 dating from the Ramessid Period (vid. also Moret, 1988).

The central points made here are that: 1) doing Maat is the indispensable link between sovereign and Divinity, as well as between the ordinary person and the Divinity; 2) that image and filiation are in the final analysis rooted and expressed in this practice of Maat; 3) that this practice is both spiritual and ethical with an interconnectedness evident throughout Maatian theology and ethics; and 4) that the son/father or more expansively, child/parent model of mutual obligation stands as a central paradigm of ethical behavior.

6.3 The Perfectibility of Humans

6.3.1 Conceptual Implications

Closely linked to the Maatian anthropological concept of the divine image of humans is the concept of the perfectibility of humans. This is not in the sense of finished moral product, but in the sense of progressive development; perpetual becoming and the possibility of assimilation with God as expressed in the Book of Coming Forth By Day and other ethico-religious texts which project blameless and faultless characters. Gunn (1916:11) among others have observed that "the Egyptian, as reflected in these texts, was little disposed to humble himself before the deity." That is to say, " . . .the attitude of the miserable sinner so characteristic of the Christian and other Semitic religions is unknown in these writings." Continuing, he cites the Declarations of Innocence in which the deceased

seeking vindication and eternal life declares himself innocent of offenses against God, humans and nature. He notes that all the candidates for immortality "proclaim (their) freedom from every human frailty," identify themselves with various divine powers and describe themselves "as miracles of <u>human perfection</u>" (emphasis mine). He (1916:81-82) wonders if "this attitude arose from intense spiritual and material (sic) pride (probably unequalled elsewhere in the world)" or as a "consequence of the profound belief in the creative power of the spoken word" or just "lying" and "bluff." The first two suggestions have merit; the third is pejorative and reductive, less objective scholarship than a reflection of what appears to be a Judeo-Christian centered expectation of similarity. Therefore, he and many other Egyptologists praise the confessional hymns in the New Kingdom as more in keeping with the Judeo-Christian understanding of piety.

As noted above, the ancient Egyptians were indeed proud, self-confident and believed deeply in the power of the word as both <u>Hu</u> (authoritative utterance) and <u>Heka</u> (words of power) which along with <u>Sia</u> (exceptional insight) Ra created the world. Again, both can be seen as an emulation of Ra or the aspiration to be like Ra. Both Lichtheim and Daumas (1962) realized that perfectibility was a clear goal and conception of the human person in ancient Egypt. Lichtheim (AEL I:6) notes that central to the anthropology

expressed in the Sebait was "the optimistic belief in the teachability and perfectibility of man . . . ." Thus, Ptahhotep teaches that

ir wnn.i m sšmy
ḥr wḏ.n sẖr n ‘š3t
ḥḥ.n.k sp nb mnḫ
r wnt sẖrw.k nn iw im.f

If you are a leader
who commands the affairs of the many
seek out very excellent thing
so that there is no fault in your
conduct. (Ptahhotep, 84-87)

Or again, he says:

ir mr.i nfr sšm.k
nḥm.tw m‘ ḏwt nbt
‘ḥ‘t ḥr sp n ‘wn-ib (Ptahhotep, 298-300)

If you wish your conduct to be perfect
And free from all evil
guard against the vice of greed.

The word for perfect used here is *nfr* which basically means good, beautiful, but the sense indicated here by the following phrase "be free from all evil" is clearly one of "perfect" which is how Lichtheim also translated it (AEL I:68).

Daumas (1962:162) also recognizes and discusses Ptahhotep's stress on perfection and the "idéal humain" of Maat which requires such an emphasis (see also Daumas, 1951, 1967). He maintains that according to the moral ideal of Maat, "one must, without cease, strive toward perfection (tendre vers la perfection)." This striving toward perfection is what I have referred to as progressive perfection. For as Daumas notes, such striving carries with it the

recognition that "no one is assured of absolute wisdom"or absolute perfection. But it remains the goal and, I would argue, represents an aspiration and ideal standard rather than an actuality.

Thus, when Paheri (29-30) says "my excellent character raised me high. I was summoned as one who is blameless. If I were placed on the scales I would come out complete, whole and sound," he speaks to an ideal of perfection. It is a claim or rather projected standard, made not simply to his peers but to posterity as an epitaph, an aspiration and request to be remembered as such. Again as Lichtheim argues, this literature is for eternity and thus one projects the best. But the Sebait are for daily life. The goal is progressive perfection and the teachings thus express the assumption of human perfectibility. As noted above in the section on ontology, this conception of progressive perfection is best expressed by the concept of *ḫprt* or <u>khepert</u> the perpetual process of becoming, perpetual striving, going through stages of moral achievement, of self-mastery, reciprocity and all the other virtues or excellences (*iḳrw, mnḫw, nfrw*). Again, this anthropological concept is more aspiration than announcement and evolves from a concept of progressive perfection rather than one of static perfection. In a word, it is an unfolding and becoming at ever higher levels, not a finished state of static completion.

6.3.2 Assimilation with God

The concept of perfectibility contains within it the concept of the assimilation with God. Throughout the funerary literature i.e., the Pyramid Texts, Coming Forth, the Book of Vindication, and other texts, one finds prayers or declarations of becoming one with God after being judged righteous. For Maat, as argued below, is the grounds of common substance and unity. And to be truly righteous is to be one with God, to share in his spiritual essence. In Coming Forth, the risen and righteous person becomes in fact one with and as Osiris, the risen and justified divinity. In Chapter 22 of Coming Forth, the risen and justified says, "I shall not be kept from the Council of the Great God, (for I am) Osiris, the Lord of Rosetau, this (God) who is at the top of the terrace." Earlier in the Pyramid Texts, it says King Pepi has risen and been equipped with the form of Osiris (Budge, 1960:91). Also, frequently the risen and justified (*m3ʿ ḫrw*) is posed as Horus "beloved son of his Father" (Coming Forth, 9). And in Coming Forth, Chapter 11b, the risen and justified says, "I have stood up as Horus: I have sat down as Ptah...," identifying and assimilated with Horus and Ptah.

This identification appears in the texts as both assimilation to as well as similarity to in some divine quality. Thus in Chapter 11b of Coming Forth, not only does the risen and justified person claim identification with

Horus and Ptah, but also similarity with Djehuti in strength and to Atum in power. What is central here, however, is that these claims are made by the justified (*m3' ḫrw*) who because of his/her Maat is able to declare "I live again after death like Ra every day" (Coming Forth, Chapter 38). The justified also says, "I am a soul, I am Ra . . .wrong-doing is my abomination . . . I ponder Maat. I live by it . . . . I am the lord of light" (Chapter 85).

In the Book of Vindication (CT I:314-320) in the chapter of becoming, the divinity Shu, the vindicated one (*m3' ḫrw*) says,

> I am the soul of Shu, the self-created god . . . I have come into being from the flesh of the self-created god. I am merged into God. I have become he.

Again, this is an expression of identification with the Divine which occurs in the context of post-justification or vindication. It thus reaffirms the power and glory associated with vindication. For having been justified, one is enabled to say, "I shine like Ra daily. I establish truth and expel falsehood" (CT II:149) or again one says,

> I will not perish. For I have entered into Maat, I have upheld Maat. I am a possessor of Maat. I have gone forth in Maat and my form is raised up . . . . I have entered in Maat. I have attained its limit. I am Ptah. (CT IV:170-171).

Assimilation with God is also conceptually posited in the Sebait as similarity, image and likeness. Thus, as cited above, both the Book of Ani (x:8-10) and the Book of Amenomope (21:7-8) offer concepts of Godlikeness in the

possession of divine qualities such as ethical sensitivity and intervention for the vulnerable and listening to one's fellows in human sensitivity and "communicative solidarity." This, of course, is doing Maat which is both an ethical and spiritual act, not simply for humans but for the universe and God himself who lives by Maat. For it increases the good in the world and enhances it and the doer's ontological potential. Thus again one acts like Maat and in doing so assimilates with Ra.

6.3.3 Essential Goodness of Human Nature

Assimilation with God and perfectibility are also conceptually reinforced by the assumption that human nature is endowed by the Creator and is essentially good, for it is in his likeness, i.e., rooted in Maat. Thus, there is no concept of sin, even though Jewish, Christian and Islamic scholars looking for similarities with their own religion might call moral offenses in Kemetic ethical literature "sin." It is interesting to note that in David Shennum's English-Egyptian Index of Faulkner's Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, there is no listing for sin. There is, however, ample listings with many overlappings for:

wrong	*isft,nf, bt3, sbt, iyt*
wrong-doing	*d3yt, bgsw, ḫsyt, ḫww, iwyt, iw*
evil	*sbt, bin, sḏb, ḏw, bint, ḏwt, ḏwy*
evil-doer	*isfty, nik, irr*

There is, then, simply no concept in Maatian ethics or theology similar to the Augustinian concept of sin as a "disease of the soul," a soiled and wounded soul.

The difference between the Kemetic concept of moral failure (wrong-doing, offense) and the Jewish-Christian-Islamic notion of sin can be seen in the difference between the two Swahili words *kosa (ma)* and *dhambi*. The word, *dhambi*, which has a definite religious sense is derived from the Arabic and is used to translate the concept of sin as defined in the three so-called revealed faiths. Thus, the Swahili dictionary, Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu (1981:44) defines *dhambi* as "kosa linalovunja amri au sheria ya dini--an offense which violates a religious command or law." However, the word *kosa* carries no such religious meaning. And though it may be used in a religious context, its primary meaning is "fanya lisilo sahihi au lisilokatazwa; fanya vibaya, potoka--do what is incorrect or what is forbidden; to do wrong, have gone astray or turned aside" (Kamusi, 1981:136).

An even more expressive example of this distinction between *dhambi* as sin and *kosa (ma)* as moral failure without stain is found in the Standard Swahili-English Dictionary's (1987:223) list of meanings of *kosa (ma)*. As its primary meanings it lists: make a mistake; do wrong, offend; go astray; blunder; err; fail to get, hit, find or attain; miss a mark, fall short, be deficient, etc." The essential

meaning here as in the Kemetic conception of offense speaks to a moral failure that is behavioral and changeable, not ontological and requiring divine alteration in someway. Indeed, as there is no sin, there is likewise no need for religious transformation in Maatian theology and ethics, i.e., no need for either conversion or salvation.

Although Bleeker (1966:82) uses the word sin to describe offense in ancient Egyptian ethics, he correctly defines the Kemetic conception of moral offense. For he says, "a striking feature of the Egyptian language . . .is that sin proves to be closely associated with the disagreeable, with foolishness, and that guilt is linked with the idea of error and with the financial and judicial." In fact, this description reflects not a conception of sin and guilt, but of error, offense and shame. For he (1966:84, 85) goes on to say that the ancient Egyptian's sense of wrong "does not originate from a feeling of unholiness" but in the sense of regret "that he has been foolish and that he has therefore acted badly."

Moreover, as Frankfort (1961:73, 74) states, "The Egyptian views his misdeeds not as sins but as aberrations. They would bring him unhappiness because they disturbed his harmonious integration with the existing world . . . ." Thus, "He who errs is not a sinner but a fool and his conversion to a better way of life does not require repentance but a better understanding." Frankfort states that "lack of

insight or lack of self-restraint were at the root of man's misfortunes, but not a basic corruption." Humans, then, are neither evil by nature nor sinfully corrupted. And thus, one is capable of self-transcendence by self-understanding in community and self-transformation rather than by grace. For it is not by the grace of God but by following his way, Maat, that is posed as the key to moral grounding and human flourishing.

Given the absence of the concept of sin in Kemetic religious and ethical thought, the proper attitude toward moral offense and failure is not guilt but rather shame. Fingarette (19:28ff) has drawn this important distinction between guilt and shame in Confucianism. Guilt, he notes, comes from an inward sense of stain which has no ground in Confucianism. It is, he (19:30) says, "an inward state, a repugnance at inner corruption, of self-denigration, of the sense that one is, as a person and independently of one's public status and repute, mean and reprehensible." He goes on to say that "guilt is an attack on oneself, whereas shame is an attack upon some specific action or outer condition." Shame, as a condition caused by an outward factor, i.e., an offense, failure, etc., does not reflect or generate a sense of profound inner stain. Rather, it calls for corrective measures to alter the outward condition which has generated it. It is this sense of shame rather than guilt which generates and undergirds the so-called penitential hymns of

the New Kingdom (Sadek, 1987; Assmann, 1975; Gunn, 1936; Erman, 1911). For here one defines one's moral failure as emanating not from an inner stain, but rather from a correctable flaw, most often related to ignorance as discussed below. Thus, it is this conviction that ignorance in various forms is the chief source of moral failure that informs the Sebait or Instructions.

Again, if there is no sin, then there is no need for religious transformation, i.e., conversion or salvation. For the divine nature is already there, it simply has to be cultivated through teaching and learning and Maatian social practice. Moreover, with no original sin as in Judeo-Christian anthropology, one has no ontological stain. Therefore, one is born not in sin but in a context of possibilities. Offense against God, humans and nature, then, can be corrected by teaching, learning and self-corrective practice and do not require confession and conversion or divine grace to an unworthy and inherently sinful being.

6.3.4 Potentiality and Maatian Practice

This ontological potential which is rooted in the essential goodness of being and the divinely endowed human person is again most clearly defined in the person and potential of the royal ruler and his Maatian practice. In the early period of Maatian theology and ethics, the king is the paradigmatic human and his ontological potential is even

greater, for he is on one level a nṯr and appears from available literature to have been at this point the exclusive possessor of this potential. But with the end of the Old Kingdom, as noted above, this Godlike potential is open to all. Thus, Rediu Khnum in the Middle Kingdom describes himself as "*nṯry r m33*"--godly to behold" and "a precious timber made by God" (Lange and Schäfer, II 1908:165.4, 20). And as noted above, examples of this claim to godlikeness are evident from the First Intermediate Period through the Late Period of Kemetic history. The ontological grounds for this God-likeness is Maat which is defined not only as a divine, natural and social order but also, as the essential substance and sustenance of God and king.

As Frankfort (1948b:157-158) says, "it is by means of the concept of Maat that the essential affinity of god and king is expressed." As he notes, a good example of this is Hatshepsut's definition of her affinity and oneness with Amun Ra in terms of Maat, as cited above. She says:

> *s'r.n.i m3't mrt.n.f*
> *iw rḫ.n(.i) 'nḫ.f im.s*
> *t.i pw.i s'm.i i'dt.i*
> *wn.kwi rf m ḥ'w w' ḥn'.f*
>
> I have offered the Maat which he loves
> I know he lives by it.
> It is my bread and I drink of its dew
> I am as one body with him.

Maat, then, is the grounds for the ontological unity between God and humans. And thus no ontological gap exists between them, as it does in the religious anthropologies of Judaism,

Christianity and Islam. What is required is to recognize one's true nature and act accordingly, i.e., *mi n<u>t</u>r* or *mi R'*--like God, like Ra.

If Maat, i.e., the spiritual/ethical dimension of humans, is the critical constitutive element of being human, then Maat must be cultivated by righteous thought, emotion, speech, and conduct in order for each human to realize his/her potential fully. The end point of this for the king, as mentioned above, was godhood and that of ordinary humans was perfectibility. Therefore, in the Book of Vindication (CT I:31) when the righteous dead rise and stand vindicated, "<u>maa-kheru</u>," before history and heaven, s/he says, now "the length of the sky belongs to my strides and the width of the earth belongs to my domain." For "I am he/she who is one with God. I have become He" (Karenga, 1984:116). This in Maatian theology is an expression of the concept of spiritual assimilation through righteousness,in a word, by becoming the embodiment of Maat, i.e., the image and essence of God.

But again, it is important to state that the ideal of perfectibility is very real to the ancient Egyptians. In both the Declarations of Innocence and the Declarations of Virtues, "the presentation of the moral personality, as befitted its nature, was declaratory rather than narrative (Lichtheim, 1988:6). As Lichtheim states, given this "the modern reader is likely to doubt their veracity." But "such

doubt is besides the point." For what matters is the possibility of perfectibility and the values which promised this were recognized and formulated not as "remote ideals preached by saints, only to be disregarded in the real world." On the contrary, these values represented "precepts that any well-intentioned person could fulfill." Thus, the striving for progressive perfectibility has a lived concreteness to it, a set of values reflected in the ethical literature especially the Declarations of Innocence, The Declarations of Virtue and the Sebait which become both the task and goal of the Maatian life.

6.4 The Teachability of Humans

6.4.1 Moral Wisdom

A third conceptual pillar of the Maatian conception of the human person is his/her teachability. The Sebait, or Books of Instruction, are dedicated to the proposition that the human person is malleable, teachable, capable of moral cultivation which leads to his/her higher self (AEL I:6). Also, Frankfort (1961:60) states that "the great popularity of the 'teachings' (Sebait) is in itself revealing." The Egyptians were evidently convinced that the good life could be taught." It is, he concludes, "a conviction (which) betrays a surprising confidence in the efficacy of man's understanding" and above all his/her transformability. This, as he notes, is in noticeable contrast to the theology and anthropology of Mesopotamia and Israel where anxiety and

doubts about the transformability of humans and their fate was the rule. It is because of their serene belief in the human capacity for transformation and progressive perfection, Frankfort believes, that the Sebait "are viewed so rarely in the religious context where they belong." Instead, "they are usually interpreted as secular guides of conduct." This means that not only is there a failure to see that in an ancient culture such as Egypt "the contrast between the secular and sacred is difficult to draw," but also such uncritical treatment "obscures their true significance and their particularly Egyptian character."

It is also important to note that learning is directed toward wisdom and that wisdom in ancient Egypt is moral wisdom in the service of social and human good. It thus is the wisdom of Maat in the spiritual, ethical and social sense. It requires listening, learning and doing what is right. Therefore, Ptahhotep teaches that the hearing son succeeds and "his deeds are distinguished." But "failure will follow him who hears not" (570-572). Defining the moral and social significance of wisdom, he poses it as morally compelling for parents to teach the moral and social lessons to their children which they themselves were taught so that the children may walk in the "ways of the ancestors," i.e., the way of Maat (37). Moreover, they are to be examples of righteous living for practice is the concrete lesson. Therefore, he says, " "set a good example, don't

given offense. If Maat is made firm, your children will live" (Ptahhotep, 596-597). Note here again, Maat is equated with life and how doing Maat sustains a person. Teaching and learning, then, are acts of moral cultivation in community. Knowledge here is essentially a moral concept involving knowledge of right and wrong, knowledge of self.

6.4.2 The Wise Person and the Fool

In the development of moral wisdom in Sebaitic literature, we find an important distinction between the wise person (*rḫ*) and the fool (*wḫ3*). In Ptahhotep, the distinction is made around the concepts of hearing, truth, success and life. In the passage below, the wise man is linked with leadership and is described as follows:

> If good example is set by one who leads
> He will be renowned forever
> And his wisdom will be for all time
> The wise aids his ba with that which endures
> so that it is happy with him on earth
> The wise is known by his wisdom
> A noble person by his good deeds
> His heart directs his tongue
> His lips are accurate when he speaks
> He has eyes that see
> His ears are pleased at hearing what is
> useful for his son
> He acts according to Maat and is free from
> falsehood. (Ptahhotep, 520-532)

The moral portrait is of one whose wisdom is morally grounded, who sets good examples through doing good deeds, and is always concerned about the legacy he leaves his descendants.

The fool is defined by his not-hearing, ignorance, failure and blame. Ptahhotep (575-587) thus says:

Now, the fool who does not listen
he can do nothing
He sees knowledge in ignorance
Benefit in the harmful
He does everything which is hateful
so that people blame him every day
He lives on that by which one dies
His food is the distortion of speech
His character in this respect is known
to the officials
(as) A living death each day
One passes over his deeds because of
the multitude of troubles on him.

The fool, then, is "a living death each day," one who "sees knowledge in ignorance and benefit in the harmful." But above all, he does not hear or listen (*sḏm*) and thus he cannot gain moral knowledge and then correct himself. Here again knowledge is life and ignorance is death. This same theme, contrasting the wise person and the fool, continues to the end of Kemetic society and appears in the Late Period in the Book of Ankhsheshonqi and the Book of Phebhor as a major theme.

Wisdom, then, is knowing the good and the right, seeing the way of Maat as the way of life and following it. It is, again, being receptive to hearing and learning. Moreover, wisdom is both an intellectual and moral virtue. Lichtheim (1979:291) discussing the Book of Ankhsheshonqi notes, the category *rḫ* (knowledge or wisdom), "as possessed by man or woman means primarily practical reason and prudence." This, of course, is wisdom as an intellectual virtue, i.e., knowledge of life and how to prosper and flourish in it as a social being, i.e., a person-in-community. But the division

made now between wisdom as an intellectual and moral virtue for analytical preciseness is not one the ancient Egyptian made. Thus, Maatian ethics sees wisdom necessary for life as both moral and intellectual grounding.

Like so many categories in ancient Egyptian, *rḫ* possesses a conceptual elasticity which allows it to signify not only different things but also different things at the same time as well as different things which are interrelated. Thus Lichtheim herself notes that "first of all the wise man is wise by way of being a pious man, 'a man of God' (*rmṯ-nṯr*)." Furthermore, "man's piety makes him receptive to 'instruction' and training (*sb3yt, myt, mtr.t*) and willing to obey the commands (*ḥn*) of God which he knows in his heart." Wisdom, then, is both rooted in and reflective of piety. In other words, one is wise to be pious and pious because one is wise, i.e., wise enough to know it is of great value (3ẖ) to one in the quest for human flourishing.

Learning to be a person of character or a good person is a primary concern of Maatian ethics. The good person is not contrasted to the wise or sensitive or self-mastered, but rather is one who is assumed to contain these virtues. Thus, the moral category "neferu" (goodness, virtue) is not reducible to any quality or virtue, but is inclusive of many virtues. Moreover, it is not a private possession but a shared human experience in relationships and moral action. Learning Maat requires an openness of self to both instruc-

tion and change and involves a two-fold process: hearing (*s<u>d</u>m*) and acting (*irt*). Actually, the word *s<u>d</u>m* encompasses both hearing and acting, for in ancient Egyptian it means listening, hearing and obeying i.e, responding in action. Thus, the first requirement is one of attentiveness, the second of grasping both cognitively and affectively; and the third is to put into practice that which is taught. "The hearer is one who listens to what is said," Ptahhotep says. And "One who loves to hear is one who does what is said." In fact, "he who hears is the beloved of God" (Ptahhotep, 553-554, 545).

6.4.3 The Geru Maa

Teaching and learning have two fundamental purposes: to cultivate the Maatian person and create and sustain the Maatian community. The process is a dialectical one in which a good society cultivates the good person and the good person creates and sustains the good society. In this regard, Maatian anthropology posits a paradigmatic person--the *grw m3'* or <u>geru-maa</u>, the truly self-mastered, "whose whole character is infused with Maat" (Morenz, 1984:118). The word is composed of "<u>geru</u>," which means silent, self-mastered, self-controlled, and of "<u>maa</u>" (truly, righteous) and thus means the truly self-mastered or the righteous self-mastered person. Budge (1924:98) makes the mistake of translating it as "the man who is truly resigned to god's guiding hand" and equates it with "submission" as the

cardinal virtue in Islam. For it is not submissiveness which is a virtue here, but self-mastery in thought and practice.

Thus, Frankfort (1961:66) is more correct in expanding the meaning from the simple root meaning silent, to concepts of self-control, self-discipline and self-mastery. "We are," he says, "apt to misunderstand the ideal of the silent man." For "it does not exalt submissiveness, meekness, or any kind of otherworldliness. The silent man is pre-eminently the successful man." But here Frankfort falls into the vulgar pragmatic interpretation he criticizes in others, calling the geru-maa essentially a "go-getter." It is not material things that the geru-maa primarily pursues, but righteousness. And it is because of this that he prospers. In some places, Frankfort seems to realize this by his stress on the concept of "success as attunement" with the cosmic, natural and social order, but in other places he seems to lapse into the vulgar pragmatic interpretation.

The geru-maa is posed as the ideal person throughout the evolution of Maatian ethics, but s/he gets her/his more definitive expression in the Book of Amenomope, a book of Sebait, written in the 20th Dynasty (c. 1195-1080 B.C.E.). In defining the geru-maa, Amenomope distinguishes him/her from the hot-tempered or unrestrained person (*šmm*), a distinction which is apparent in the Old Kingdom from the Book of Ptahhotep onward. Amenomope (VI, 1-12) says that the

self-mastered person is strong productive and durable. S/he is shade and fruit to those around and thus her/his end is in the garden (i.e., context) where s/he belongs (Israel, 1980). But the unrestrained person is unproductive and comes to a negative end.

Brunner-Traut (1979:198-213) discusses the geru maa in the context of her discussion of the virtue of silence. Thus, her stress is on the term's meaning of the silent one. But even in this context the central meaning of self-control or better self-mastery is clear. Examples she poses to discuss the virtue of *gr* or silence are: humbleness before God, the avoidance of rash words which injury and propriety in the presence of others. All of these suggest a measure of self-mastery in both thought and practice and therefore speak to the central meaning of geru maa.

As the texts reveal, the geru maa as a paradigmatic or exemplary person is, above all, a bearer of Maat and an opponent of isfet. She, as Khun-Anup says, "destroys isfet and brings Maat into being" (241-242). Thus the geru maa is not a recluse, but is always socially engaged, bringing Maat to the forefront and demonstrating its worth, its effectiveness, its greatness as Ptahhotep and Khun-Anup teach. By his very definition, the exemplary person is a model for all. Thus, Khun-Anup says of a Maatian leader, "you should be a model for all people--*iw.k ir.k twt n bw nb*" (261-262). And King Isesi tells Ptahhotep concerning teaching Ptah-

hotep's son, "Instruct him, then, in the sayings of the past that he may become a model (*ir bi*) for the children of the great" (Ptahhotep, 39). This stress on teaching and the implied molding and resultant transformation stand at the heart of the Sebait and the moral anthropology they present. Teachability and transformability are twin conceptual pillars in Maatian moral anthropology and thus the conception of both the geru maa and the ordinary person reflect this understanding.

6.4.4 Tension Between Nature and Nurture

However, this stress on teachability raises two important questions. The first deals with the question raised in Sebaitic literature itself concerning the conceptual and practical tension between nature and nurture. This point of tension emerges in what is surely one of the most important and instructive discourses in Kemetic literature on the teachability of the human person--the dialog between the Scribe Ani and his son, Khonsuhotep, which occurs in the epilogue of the Book of Ani (IX, 13 - X, 17). The importance of this text is enhanced by the fact it is the only text we have from available literature in which appears a dialog of challenge to fundamental ancient Egyptian beliefs.

Responding to his father's teachings, Khonsuhotep raises certain questions which tend to challenge the concept of the general teachability of the human person. He begins by suggesting that the moral teachings of his father were

better suited for the learned than for him in that carrying out the instructions requires a certain level of knowledge he obviously feels he lacks. In this regard, he tells his father "I wish I were like (you), as learned as you, then I would carry out your teachings." But he continues, "each man is lead by his nature (*bit*)" (IX, 13-15). This latter contention obviously raises another challenge to the concept of human teachability. For if one is led and, in this case, therefore, limited by his/her nature, then of what value is instruction?

Khonsuhotep also raises the issue of difference in moral will and aspiration saying to his father, "You are a man who is a master whose strivings are exalted" (IX, 15). Exalted strivings here seem to be a metaphor for a greater will and aspiration than Khonsuhotep feels he possesses. And thus, he draws a distinction between one who is a master with exalted moral aspirations and will and the untutored and immature son. He tells his father that the son accepts "words which please the heart," (IX, 16) but it does not mean he either understands or puts them into practice.

Finally, Khonsuhotep raises questions of coercion and insensitivity in teaching. He suggests that listening is also required of the teacher both morally and pedagogically. "Does it not happen to a man to slacken his hand so as to hear an answer in its place?," (X, 9) he asks. Continuing he states that "Humans resemble God in his way, if they

listen to a man's answer" (X, 8-9). Responding to what he perceives as his father's inflexibility and insensitive disregard for his opinion (by Ani called "worthless thoughts") and to his father's use of animal analogies to make his case, Khonsuhotep argues for equality in exchange. "One cannot know his fellow if the masses are beasts," he says. And "one cannot know his teachings and alone possess a mind if the multitude is foolish." He concludes saying, "all your sayings are excellent but doing them [requires virtues]. Tell the God who gave you wisdom: set them on your path" (X, 9-11).

To Khonsuhotep's concern that one is simply "led by his nature," Ani gives the analogy of the fighting bull, the lion, the horse, the dog, the monkey and the goose who subdue or conquer their nature (*bit*) and obey their teacher (X, 1-7). Ani here is arguing that if a wild beast or fowl can be cultivated by instruction then so can a human who ostensibly is a possessor of heart and mind and imitates God in his knowing. It is this analogy which Khonsuhotep seems to misconstrue as an equation with animals rather than a comparison and contrast in possibility to learn, as I read it. Ani then goes on to cite the capacity for cultural learning and cultivation of "Nubians and Syrians and other strangers" in the Egyptian context, using the example of their learning the Egyptian language. The suggestion here is that if foreigners can learn to speak like Egyptians and

by extension learn their culture, a native Egyptian should have no problem. It is when he ends his analogical instruction with the words, "Say: 'I shall do like the animals.' Listen and do what they do" (X, 7) that Khonsuhotep intervenes to challenge what he sees as an inappropriate and perhaps harsh analogy and reasserts the problem of difference in learning capacities.

Ani again uses analogies of the capacity of the craftsman, or the skilled person to shape and mould, citing the carpenter's capacity to take a "crooked stick left on the ground and make it a noble's staff" and take a "straight stick and make it a horse's collar" (X, 13-14). The dialog ends with Khonsuhotep conceding and using the analogy of a child turning to his mother for nurturing to signal that he, the student, recognizes the value of the teachings and is ready to be nurtured or cultivated by the teacher, his father, Ani. From the beginning, however, there is little doubt that Khonsuhotep will not win in the dialog. The dialog is really a didactic construction to raise and answer recognized questions and reaffirm the almost unlimited transformative capacity of teaching. Thus, Ani, the teacher, and the value of teaching is inevitably vindicated.

6.4.5 Ignorance and Moral Failure

A second important issue raised by this ethical stress on the teachability of humans is the tendency to pose moral failure in many cases as essentially a problem of ignorance.

In the so-called penitential prayers of the New Kingdom, there are consistent claims that one's offenses are essentially a problem of ignorance (Sadek, 1987; Assmann, 1975; Gunn, 1916; Erman, 1991). Moreover, as argued above, the Sebait are essentially posed as a path away from both ignorance and moral failure and are dedicated to the essential proposition of the teachability of humans (AEL I:6; Frankfort, 1961:60). In such a context where ignorance is seen as the essential ground for moral failure, knowledge becomes a cardinal virtue. And instruction and learning become the chief focus of moral transformation. Thus, as Frankfort (1961:77) contends, the ancient Egyptian in his offenses "is not a sinner whom God rejects but an ignorant man who is disciplined and corrected."

This focus on ignorance as the source of moral failure is attested to, as stated above, in the so-called penitential hymns and prayers in the late New Kingdom from Ramessid Deir el Medina found on pious monuments left by a community of workmen who built royal tombs. In a hymn by one Neferabu who has been cured of an illness which he believes comes from a transgression against a divinity, he explains his moral failure saying: *"(ink) s ẖm n iwty ḥ3ty.i bw rḫ nfr bin*--I was an ignorant and witless man, who knew not good or evil" (KRI III:773). Another person makes a similar claim for his moral failure in a hymn to Ra saying:

m ir ṯ3w r.i n3y.i bt3w 'š3
ink ẖm ḏt.f ink rmṯ iwty ib.f

> *wrš.i šm m-s3 r.i m iḥw*
> *m-s3 smw*
>
> Punish me not for my many misdeeds. I am one that knows not himself. I am a witless man. All day long I follow my mouth like an ox after fodder. (Gardiner, 1937:18.10,7-19.11,1)

Here moral failure is attributed to ignorance especially of oneself.

Moreover, in the analogy of the following after fodder, the suggestion is made that in a context of ignorance, instinct becomes a substitute for knowledge. The obvious solution, then, is self-understanding, discipline and self-correction. Thus, the problem here is not a question of a sinful nature or hamartia, missing the mark or even akrasia, lack of self-restraint. It is rather a question of ignorance (*ẖm*) in its general and specific forms, the lack of self-understanding (*ẖm ḏt.f*) and witlessness (*iwty ḥ3ty*) that are posed as the fundamental sources of moral failure.

In another instructive passage, ignorance is described as morally problematic in still another way, i.e., as lack of responsiveness. It says:

> If you are wealthy and strength has
>   come to you,
> And your God has built you up,
> Do not pretend to be ignorant of people
>   whom you know
> Greet everyone. Release another
>   when you find him bound.
> Give support to the afflicted.
> Good is spoken of the one who does not
>   play the ignorant one.
>   (Gardiner, 1935, II:pl. 18.1,13-2,2)

Here ignorance is posed as a vice of pretending not to know and not being responsive to familiars (one whom you know) as well as to the needs of the imprisoned one, and the afflicted or vulnerable. To be aware and responsive, the text says, "will be good in the heart of God and people will praise you." For "a person whom God has built up should foster many." Indeed, he should be defined as one who has a "hearing heart" i.e., one morally sensitive and Maat-grounded (Brunner, 1988).

All of these forms of ignorance (*ḫm*), then: lack of knowledge, witlessness, lack of self-understanding and lack of responsiveness, refer to a cognitive and moral deficiency which demands corrective instruction. It is this corrective stress placed on instruction that appears most definitively in the Sebait. And it is this fundamental function which the Sebait, the Books of Wise Instruction, serve. Thus, in one untitled Sebait, the father says to the son, "I cause you to know in your heart the matter of Maat. May you do what is right (*'ḳ3*) for you" (Gardiner, 1935 II:43 pl. 20; 6, 8-9). Amenomope (XXVII, 10) says of his Teachings, "they make the unaware knowledgeable." And Amen-nakhte says in his Instruction for his apprentice Harmin, that they are maxims for the way of life and he informs his student: "You are a man who listens to words so as to distinguish bad from good" (Posener, 1955:62.2-3). The thrust again is to teach moral knowledge, to cultivate the capacity to distinguish

right from wrong, good from evil--in a word, Maat from isfet. Therefore, Khun-Anup says "Be patient that you may discover Maat" (B1-209).

Finally, Neferhotep in the 19th Dynasty says in a prayer to Ra,

> Since you have ever set Maat
> before my heart I offer it to
> thy ka. (Davies, 1973:54, Pl.37)

Here, in an act of reciprocity between God and humans, Neferhotep returns to God what he has given, Maat. This setting of Maat before or in the heart is essentially the inculcation of moral knowledge and moral sensitivity, for *ib* is both heart and mind. Thus, it is a divine gift which enables one to know right from wrong and to be morally sensitive to others.

A moral knowledge, then, which distinguishes right from wrong undergirds and informs the Maatian life. On an important level, this moral knowledge is a moral self-knowledge which not only grounds one in Maatian behavior, but also gives one both a sense of one's capacity and his or her link with the eternal and divine. Zahan (1979:120) has expressed a similar meaning of moral thought and practice among the Bambara. He states that in Bambara ethics,

> [o]nly the endeavors tending to affirm one's essence are good and worthy of interest, that is to say, those which bring the human back towards himself so he may affirm his everlastingness.

It is in a similar sense that Kemetic moral theology links one with the divine and eternal. And in such a context, one

is not only promised eternal life through righteousness, but one senses one's divineness.

Thus, Rediu Khnum says in confident self-knowledge in the context of his moral self-presentation "I am one who knows himself as foremost among men. A costly timber made by God, who was given skill in his planning and great excellence in his performance" (20). And *S3-tp-iḥw*, governor under Queen Hatshepsut, describes the interrelatedness of the human, the divine and the eternal in descriptions of "the gifts of the blameless person," the righteous one. They include presence in heaven and power on earth, eternal life, status among the ancestors and eternalness of one's name and work on earth (Urk. IV:518.7-15). It is in this context that Maatian knowledge and moral grounding and the quest for the eternal are all linked and pursued. Thus, one reads in the Book of Vindication (CT I, 79) that the righteous and resurrected are told "It is your righteousness which creates your power; it is your character which makes you noble."

6.4.6 The Problematic of Ignorance

The Maatian preference for attributing moral failure to ignorance in its various forms and to posing knowledge as a cardinal and corrective virtue raises a series of problematic questions. It also poses an interesting parallel with Socratic moral theory and the so-called Socratic paradox it engenders as found in the Dialogs of Plato, especially

Protagoras and Georgias (Irwin, 1977:chapters IV and V; Santas, 1964; Allen, 1960).

Socratic moral theory on knowledge and virtue has essentially four basic interlocking contentions, most of which find parallels in Maatian moral theory. These are: 1) no one voluntarily chooses to do what one considers to be bad; 2) the possession and practice of virtue requires knowledge and can be equated with it; 3) the object of moral knowledge is the Good; and thus, 4) wrongdoing reflects and is rooted in ignorance of the Good. Although Maatian ethics does not specifically state that knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice, as does Socratic moral theory, it does assert that knowledge is virtuous and corrective and ignorance is vicious and corruptive. Therefore, the assumption is made as in Socratic theory, that if one knows the Good, s/he will choose and seek it. One might, however, as the texts above demonstrate, choose a specious good by not knowing it, by not knowing oneself or not being able to distinguish, as the texts say, good from evil.

But in spite of this qualification, the tension and gap between knowledge and act still pose a fundamental problem. A central problem with this reasoning is that it has difficulty explaining why people who know what is good still choose evil. And of course, it is this difficulty which stands at the heart of the so-called Socratic paradox (Santas, 1964). Socrates seeks to deal with this problem by

defining only one form of wrongdoing, failure of wisdom and rooting this in essentially one form of ignorance, involuntary ignorance. Even akratic weakness is perceived as an involuntary condition in which one is enslaved and misled, in fact dragged along by a compelling passion or _pathe_.

But as Aristotle later argued in Book 3 and 7 in the _Nicomachean Ethics_, a taxonomic mapping of varieties of wrongdoing shows both different kinds and degrees of wrong doing and different instances when one does wrong voluntarily and must accept responsibility. This position takes into account Socrates' concern for both limiting and compelling conditions around and of the person. It also recognizes the distinction between potential and active knowledge, i.e., possession and/or possibility of knowledge vs. actualization of it. Thus, the _theriotes_ or brutish person can be shown to be essentially unthoughtful, the _kakos_ or bad person to be blinded by wrong ends, the _akolastos_ or self-indulgent person to be trapped by misunderstanding of pleasure and the _akrates_ or weak willed person misled by forgetfulness of the Good or dragged along by passion. But even the failures of mind, as Aristotle argued, are often rooted in failures of character for which one can and ought to be held accountable (Irwin, 1980: Rorty, 1980a).

This contention finds parallels and support in Maatian moral theory. For responsibility is a constant concern even

in the context of claim and recognition of ignorance. Therefore, the *hm-dt*, one ignorant of self, or the *iwty-h3ty*, the mindless or witless person who goes along "like cattle after fodder" is portrayed as accepting responsibility for his or her behavior and seeks forgiveness as the above cited text states. Inherent in this recognition and confession of moral failure is the presumed will to self-correct. Moreover, the Maatian correlative stress on character offers a necessary balance between focus on failures of mind/emotion (*ib, h3ty*) and failures of character.

Thus, all wrongdoing (isfet) is not attributed or attributable to ignorance in Maatian ethics although such an emphasis is clear and weighty. For Maatian moral theory, clearly allows for character sources of wrongdoing. The isfetic or wrongdoing person may be characterized by a series of vices. Lichtheim (1988:253) in her study of Maat of the autobiographies and the Sebait lists several "principle vices and crimes" which can be seen as character flaws rather than simple problems of knowledge and ignorance. These include: a) *grg* (lying, deceit); b) *'wn, 'wn-ib* (greed and rapacity; c) *sh3, shm-ib* (aggression and violence); d) *ndyt* (baseness); e) *d3t* (crime). Certainly, all these species of wrongdoing have an intellectual dimension, in that they imply choice, decision and will. But they cannot

simply be defined as an intellectual error or error in knowledge.

Finally, Maatian moral theory recognizes the role of will and the lack of it, or the problem of self-control as noted in Amenomope's (IV, 6, 1-6) discussion of the unrestrained or hot-tempered person (*šmm*). It is here the ancient Egyptians pose both the sedjemic person, i.e., the hearing person and the geru maa, the truly self-controlled person whose character is strong and durable. But it is interesting to note that even in the question of will and self-constraint, learning and teaching, i.e., knowledge is still posed as the central and indispensable element in moral transformation, character-construction and flourishing. In fact, this stress on learning and teaching is perhaps what is most distinctive about Maatian ethics and finds its parallel on one level most closely in Confucianism rather than the three major "revealed" religions (Tu, 1985, 1979).

6.5 The Free Will of Humans

6.5.1 Introduction

A fourth basic concept in Maatian moral anthropology is the free will of humans. The ground of free will is in divine endowment, but it is further supported by Maatian concepts of: 1) malleability of human nature and 2) the absence of an overriding concept of fate. The locus classicus of the doctrine of free will is in Coffin Text 1130

(CT VII:462-464). In this passage the Creator lists Four Good Deeds he has done and among them is the freedom to choose good or evil. I will quote the entire section in order to set a context for the free will concept. For it is posited in the context of shared gifts which the Creator gives humankind. He says,

> *iw ir.n.i spw 4 nfrw m h̲nw sbh̯t 3h̯t*
>
> *iw ir.n.i t̲3ww 4 ssn s nb m h3w.f sp im pw*
> *iw ir.n.i ḥ'ḥw wr sh̯m ḥwrw mi wr sp im pw*
> *iw ir.n.i s nb mi snw.f n wd̲(.i) ir.sn isft*
> *in ibw.sn hd̲ d̲dt.n.i sp im pw*
> *iw ir.n.i tm ibw.sn r smh̯t n 'Imnt n mrwt*
> *irt ḥtpt nt̲ryt n nt̲rw sp3tw sp im pw*
> (CT VII:461-465)
>
> I did Four Good Deeds within the portals of the horizon:
>
> I made the four winds so that every man might breathe there from in his time. This is the First Deed.
> I made the great flood waters so that the humble person might benefit from it like the great. This is the Second Deed.
> I made every man like his fellow. <u>I did not command that they do evil. It was their hearts that violated what I had said</u>. This is the Third Deed.
> And I caused that their hearts not forget the West in order that divine offerings might be made to the divine powers of the provinces. This is the Fourth Deed. (emphasis mine)

The textual setting of this granting of free will is significant because it is among others essential and shared endowments given to humanity. Thus, it assumes an added importance in its positioning among the gifts of: 1) the shared breath of life; 2) the shared flood waters symbolic of the bounty of nature; and 3) shared memory of obligation

to the divine. The stress on "the shared" evolves from the phrase "like his fellow--*mi snw.f*" which is a gift within a gift. For although it is linked in the same sentence with the grant of free will, it is a grant in its own right of human equality or shared status. And this is key to the concept of human dignity discussed below. Humans, then, are free to act as they will and they may choose Maat or isfet, good or evil. But as the choice is theirs, they must bear the moral responsibility for their choice. Maat-doing leads to a long and successful life and immortality in the next world. Isfet-doing leads to failure and destruction in this world and/or the next.

This is the law of reciprocity expressed in the Book of Kheti which says, "A blow struck is repayed by a similar one, for to every action there is a response" (Merikara, 123). And Ankhsheshonqi says, "Do a good deed and throw it in the water; when it dries you will find it" (AEL III:174). According to Maatian philosophy, then, there is an established order of things, i.e., Maat, in which evil is counterproductive, but righteous or Maatian conduct affirms human life and human flourishing. Therefore, Ptahhotep and Khun Anup praise Maat as effective and enduring in spite of and in contrast to the short term gains of wrongdoing. The positive generative effect of Maat and the counterproductivity of isfet are key tenets in the conceptual framework of Maatian ethics and appear throughout the literature.

Moreover, they are both clear and certain. As Amenomope says, "Do good and you will prosper" (XVII, 5). And, he continues, follow the moral instructions and "you will find (them) a storehouse for life and your person will prosper upon earth" (IV, 1).

Again, it is important to note this free will does not bring evil in the world. Evil as the negative and as an ontological principle is in the structure and process of being, as noted above in chapter V. For being is possibility and potential and evil is among the many things possible. But in Maatian ontology, Maat is always triumphant in this ongoing clash of opposites so again there is no fall of humans, no ontological stain of sin and no resultant alienation from the creator. Free will causes evil and good in society, but it is not responsible for the existence of evil in being. This is an important distinction, for such a concept requires neither a theodicy nor a concept of origi-nal sin. And Kemet has neither.

6.5.2 The *IB* (Heart/Mind)

Key to the responsible exercise of freewill is moral conscience which the ancient Egyptians conceived as rooted in the heart called "*ib*" or "*ḥ3ty*." Actually "*ib*" or "*ḥ3ty*" means both heart and mind and is used in the sacred texts as moral conscience (Piankoff, 1930). As early as Ptahhotep, the heart had become the moral conscience as Breasted (1934: 254) notes. Thus, Ptahhotep (550) says:

in ib sḫpr nb.f
m sḏm m tm sḏm

It is the heart which causes
its owner to hear or not hear.

This is both rational and emotional hearing, in a word, moral responsiveness. Moreover, Ptahhotep (551) says, "a man's heart is his life, property and health." This links the heart as moral conscience to Maat and Maat is already established as the ground of the good life on earth and the divine life in the Hereafter.

Brunner's (LÄ II 1158) discussion of the heart has pointed to eight basic aspects of the heart. Most important to Maatian anthropology is: 1) its "secular-anthropological" aspect in which it is depicted in ancient Egyptian texts as the seat of emotion and reason, feeling and thoughts both negative and positive; 2) its religious-anthropological aspect in which it is viewed as a medium through which God speaks to the human person; and 3) its partnership aspect in which it is described as a partner of man reinforcing his courage and determination in difficult situations.

Bilolo (1988:53-58) identifies five fundamental functions of the heart which have moral significance: a) "a seat of intelligence and producer of thought;" b) "a representative of the Great spirit and as the habitat of sia;" c) "the judge of human behavior," d) an "'autonomous principle' and 'companion' of man;" and e) "a faculty/property of the soul or spirit," i.e., the ba. He correctly defines the heart as

the "heart-mind" and the "heart-reason," for it represents both moral knowledge and reasoning capacity, but also moral sensitivity (1988:52). Bilolo goes on to define the heart as:

> The center of moral life, the seat of moral sentiments--love, courage, the will; and as the seat of the intellectual faculties of man--wisdom, mind, intelligence, thought, memory, etc.

It is this multidimensional faculty of the heart that makes it so essential in Maatian moral discourse.

In the context of all these different aspects of the *ib*, certainly the role of moral guide stands out. In fact, it is so central that the ancient authors called it the "god within humans." The scribe and mayor, Paheri, who served under both Thutmose I and Hatshepsut, uses this conception twice in his autobiography. In the first instance, he uses it in a description of the Hereafter for the righteous.

> You travel through eternity in joy
> In the favor of the god which is in you
> Your heart is with you
> and does not abandon you.
> (Urk. IV:117.11-14)

This calls to mind Chapter 30 of Coming Forth in which the deceased asks his heart not to "bear witness against him,: and not to oppose him so that he may become "a blessed one therein."

Within his moral self-presentation, Paheri, once again, presents the concept of the heart as the god within. He says, "I knew the God which dwells in humans. Knowing him, I knew this from that and did the tasks as they were ordered

(Urk. IV:119.15-120.1). This passage seems to contain two interlocking concepts. The first is the concept of the heart as a god in man and woman. For the word *rmṯ* here has both a man and woman determinative--thus referring to all humans. This "god" is essentially the source and expression of moral knowledge and moral sensitivity, guiding one in Maatian behavior. Secondly, the passage also seems to refer to the divineness of the human person, his or her dignity as a son or daughter of God. Thus, it suggests a special status for humans and therefore a special moral consideration as explained below in the section on the Maatian concept of human dignity in Chapter VIII.

Intef, herald of Thutmose III and governor of the Thinite district, attributes his moral understanding and virtuous behavior to his heart which was, he says, an excellent witness and guide--in fact, a god to him. He says,

in ib.i rdi iry.i st m sšm.f ḫr.i
iw.f n.i m mtr mnḫ
n hḏ.n.i ḏdt.f
snḏ.kwi r tht sšm.f
rwḏ.kwi ḥr.s wrt
mnḫ.n.i ḥr rdit.n.f iry.i
iḳr.n.i m sšm.f
is grt m3ʿ --- in rmṯ tp r3
nṯr pw iw.f m ẖt nbt
w3ḏ pw sšm.n.f r w3t nfrt nt irt
mk.wi m mitt iry (Urk. IV:974.1-11)

It was my heart that made me do this
    as it guided me,
it was for me an excellent witness
and I did not disobey what it said.
For I feared straying from its guidance.
I flourished greatly on account of it,
I excelled through what it caused me to do
and I became worthy by its guidance.

True is [what] people [tell] by saying:
It is a god in every body,
Blessed is one whom it guides to the
good way to act;
For, lo, I was such a one.

Intef has presented the heart as playing a central role in his moral development and guidance. And he offers the advice that one is blessed by its guidance to good behavior.

Finally, as late as the Ptolemaic period this concept continues. And one Panehemisis says,

The heart of a man is his god.
And my heart is satisfied with what
I have done. (Otto, 1954:38)

The heart, then, is both the measure and measurement of humans. It is guide and witness and a sure indication of his moral knowledge, moral sensitivity and moral standing. The essential moral functions then of heart are those of moral sensitivity and moral reasoning and thus are central to any concept of free will. Moreover, it is this same heart which the ancient Egyptians believed would bear witness in vindication of a person on the Day of Judgment or indict her or him as stated above. So it plays the added role of moral witness in the Hereafter.

6.5.3 The Ba

Loprieno (1988:91ff) has rightly called attention to the fact that the ba concept is also important to the concept of moral autonomy. It is often translated as "soul," but it can be translated also as the person herself, one's "personified alter ego" (Žabkar, 1968:113; 1954). Loprieno

(1988:91) states that "the appearance of ba theology represents . . .the first sign of a perspective change in the religious worldview" of the ancient Egyptians. For him the ba is important not only because it is a form of survival after death, but also because, unlike the ka, it represents a personal rather than a socially-rooted phenomenon. Assmann (1990:115) also notes this "independence from social binding" which is reflected in the theory of the ka. But as he notes, the ba remains socially rooted through the concept of Maat. For the ba cannot have an afterlife if it is not in conformity with Maat.

This is, in part the meaning of Baines' (1991:145) description of the ba as "perhaps, the moral essence of a person's motivation and movement." It is in this context that Ptahhotep says, "*in rḫ sm b3.f m smnt nfr.f im.f tp-t3* --A wise one cares for his ba by establishing his goodness in it on earth" (524-525). Goedicke (1970:69) reads this as "an admonition to a man to perform good deeds on earth for the benefit of his ba after death." He even argues that the good deeds on earth actually "constitute the ba."

Given the fact that Maat, which is pre-eminently a social concept and practice, is the basis for the afterlife of the ba (soul), one cannot easily separate the personal and social. In a communitarian context, the division between the personal and social are often blurred and thus the ba is pre-eminently personal but unavoidably tied to the

social by both the principle of Maat and the communitarian concept of person-in-community as distinct from the individual (Menkiti, 1984). Therefore, Loprieno (1988:91) is correct in his perception of the ba as a source of autonomy, but the autonomy is still in community.

Summarizing the development of the concept of the ba, Loprieno (1988:92) states that:

> It appears in wisdom literature as an instance of control for the social dimension of Egyptian life, and later it relates to the autonomy and intellectual 'competence' of the individual as in the Lebensmude . . . ."

Thus, the ba, as an expression of moral autonomy and intellectual competence, develops as an important concept in Maatian moral anthropology.

6.5.4 The Issue of Destiny

The question of free will is further informed and defined by the issue of predestination which appears in ancient Egyptian texts. Morenz and Müller (1960) have argued that there is evidence of predeterminism in the Old Kingdom. Fecht (1972: 133) agreed with Morenz and Müller, contending that in the Old Kingdom there is a predestination in the "radical sense." He perceives in several passages in Ptahhotep a belief in fate which begins before birth and "includes both early existence and the fate in death" (Fecht, 1972:128). But he contends this concept was overshadowed and changed during the First Intermediate Period

and a new ideal of personal responsibility for one's actions emerged.

However, Mosi (1982) in an incisive article on "God, Fate and Free Will in Egyptian Wisdom Literature" has presented an important counter to this argument. He (1982:79) asserts that such an interpretation of radical predestination hinges on faulty translation concerning the meaning and use of *ḫt*, i.e., belly or womb and the assumption of being fated in the womb. Instead, he (1982:101) argues that in the Sebait "Free will is never circumscribed; the individual is never described as being arbitrarily fated to mechanically perform any action and there is no conclusive evidence that his condition in the afterlife is ever predestined or doomed."

What one finds in the texts, Mosi continues, is emphasis on "What we have come to call the law of reward and retribution." This is essentially a law related to personal responsibility for one's action, Mosi states, "and testifies to a dynamic relationship between the freely acting individual and the omniscient, omnipotent godhead." Shai (*š3w*) or fate is usually used to refer to the allotted life span. And in the late texts, fate which is usually seen as "something fixed, inevitable and arbitrarily predetermined, becomes essentially the "law of reward and retribution" (Mosi, 1982: 102).

Lichtheim (1983:138ff) brings another dimension to the discussion of free will by pointing to the existence of paradoxes of fate and fortune found in the late Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor, especially the latter. In these paradoxes, the causal order seems to operate in reverse, disappointing humans "rightful expectations." These included both reversals of fortune and of characters. However, Lichtheim cautions that these must be taken in context and be seen as being ultimately softened and outnumbered by positive conceptions of divine intervention. For "except for the paradoxical chapter endings, all of pInsinger's teachings affirm man's moral freedom while also acknowledging that it is God who endows him with his capacity for good and to whom he turns for help in situations of need" (Lichtheim, 1983:138).

It seems apparent, then, as Lichtheim (1983:133) has pointed out, that statements and passages which suggest a limitation on human life by fate or negative divine intervention are greatly outnumbered by the declarations acknowledging God's beneficent guidance. Moreover, this is also true in terms of fate having negative control or influence on human life. Therefore, Lichtheim concludes, Morenz and Müller (1960), Brunner (1963) and others draw "a sharp conflict between free will and determinism, or more precisely, between man's helplessness and God's arbitrary freedom" which is neither correct nor especially useful.

What is required, then, is the viewing of divine free will and human free will as complementary rather than conflictual (Garnot, 1963:118-120). For as Saint Fare Garnot concludes, "L'existence est orientée (lors de la naissance) mais non predeterminée." Thus even in the Late Period,

> . . .se trouvent justifiées et reintegrées dans l'ordre des valeurs indubitables, d'un côte la liberté de Dieu et celle de l'homme, d'un autre côte la possibilité, pour l'homme, d'apprendre a vivre, quitte à solliciter, le cas échant, l'aide miraculeuse ou non, de son Createur.

What is key here is the established order of things which allows for a myriad of possibilities which do not destroy or contradict it in a significant way.

6.5.5 Conclusion

Finally, it is important to note that the concept of free will in ancient Egypt in no way approximates the modern individualistic concept of autonomy which suggests rights or will over and against society and/or community. For the ancient Egyptian the central moral issue is not choice but responsiveness conceptualized in the category *sḏm* or hearing. What is of first importance to Maatian teaching is the insistence on recognition of and responsiveness to the order of things, the divine, nature and social order. As Frankfort (1961:70) argues, the key and continuing concern is for "harmonious attunement" to the order of things and the practice of Maat was thus the way of wisdom and human flourishing. To act virtuously is to act in harmony with Maat, reaffirmed by "the god within you" which draws a definitive

line between good and evil. And to act viciously, is to act against the very nature of things and against one's own higher will out of lack of insight or lack of restraint.

As Tobin (1989:178) contends, although the ancient Egyptian, especially in the Old Kingdom, felt a sense of freedom from preordained destiny and fate and the ability to achieve the good life, they realized that "[h]appiness and contentment would not come to the man who did not live his life in a manner to produce them." For "[b]efore life could be good, it had to be ordered, it had to be lived within the confines of these principles which could insure goodness and happiness." And this, of course, was the order of Maat which had both cosmic, natural and social dimensions.

Therefore, moral education becomes indispensable to teach not free will but the choice and practice of the Good, i.e., Maat, and the counterproductivity of evil (isfet). For moral existence is an ongoing struggle to respond continuously to the higher will, i.e., the *ib* (heart/mind) or God within in the midst of pleasant but improper and self-destructive options. The free will introduced in Coffin Text 1130 becomes in this context, not the freedom to choose anything, but a responsibility to choose Good. For as the Creator says, "I did not command you to do evil," implying and leaving unsaid the real challenge to choose and do good. Failing to meet this challenge, freedom of will becomes an illusion of freedom as latitude or license rather than

responsible personhood in community. Moral discussion in ancient Egypt, becomes an ongoing dialog and discourse in self-cultivation through enlightenment and self-discipline. Therefore, we have the continuing stress on both the sedjemic person and the geru maa. Free will, then, is receptive and responsible will in reciprocal harmony with the Maatian order of things.

The concept of free will was and remains central to Maatian moral discourse. Perhaps the teaching which sums up this perspective more definitively than any other is the Instruction which admonishes a young man against using nature or fate as an excuse not to listen, learn and act according to the teachings of Maat.

> Beware lest you say 'everyman is according to his (own) character; ignorant and learned are all alike; fate and upbringing are graven upon the character in the writing of God himself. (Gardiner, 1935, Vol. II; pl. 20)

On the contrary, the instruction concludes, "instruction is good and there is no wearying of it. A son should respond with the sayings of his father." Thus, "I will cause you what is right in your heart so that you may do what is just in your sight."

6.6 The Sociality of Humans

6.6.1 Relationality and Practice

A final basic conceptual pillar in Maatian anthropology is the sociality of humans. This essentially means that identity, dignity and other basic human values are rooted in

and reflective of one's place, role and responsibility in society or community. In such a context, the category "self" as an abstract which is the central focus of much of modern European anthropology or even the "moral person," the metaphysical entity of Christian ethics does not exist in Maatian anthropology (Carrithers, et al, 1985). Instead, a person is his character, or more definitively she is her <u>practice-in-relationships</u> as a result of her character. The motivation here, then, is not to enhance individualism or define and project individual rights, but to define relational obligations, the honoring of which gives one both her identity and sense of worth. In a word, sociality not individuality is the key focus here. This does not mean there is no sense of personhood in ancient Egypt, only that there is no individuality in its most modern European sense, i.e., isolated, unembedded, contingent and ultimately alone (Heller, 1990). There is, as we argue below, a definite sense of personhood and personality but it was always "in-relation-to-" someone, some community.

Thus, a central thrust in the moral self-presentations of the autobiographies is to identify oneself and one's worthiness in the context of community. As many autobiographies demonstrate, one begins one's moral self-presentation by first locating oneself in community and then declaring what one has done worthy and who benefits from it and bears witness to it. A typical declaration of virtue is the 5th

Dynasty DOV of the priest *Wr-ḫuu* (Urk. I:46.8ff) quoted above. He says:

> I came from my town. I descended from my district. I spoke truth there. I did justice there. I never did what was harmful to people.

Others declare they did what serves the people, what people praise and God loves and wills and that they judged fairly, gave preference to the vulnerable, was beloved of parents and siblings, and that their whole town was their witness.

Another example of this social location and moral declaration is the DOV of Djehuti-Nakht-Ankh, scribe, priest and physician talks of his status in his district, his goodness to his family, his assistance to the poor and his "doing what was praiseworthy for every person." He says,

> *iw ir.n(.i) m3ʿt m sšm.i*
> *ḏʿr(.i) ib ḥsb(.i) rdiw r ḫwd*
> *ir.n.(.i) ḥsst n rmṯ nb*
> *rḫw mi ḫmw n sṯn.i*
> *ink mrwt(y) n sp3t.f*
> *n sw3(.i) ḥr ḏ3r n h3bw*
> *ink dmi nḏm n wḥwt.ɪ*
> *ʿpr n 3bwt.f nn 3hw.s*
> *ink s3 n i3w it n ẖrd*
> *ṯsw nḏsw m swt nb*
> *iw sm.i(.i) ḥkr wrḥ(.i) ḥs3*
> *iw di.n(.i) ḥbsw n nt(y) ḥ3w*
> *iw ḥk3.n(.i) ḥr inḏ šnt.n(.i) sṯ*
> *ink gr ḳrs sb n k3.f*
> *iw wp.n(.i) mdt r m3ʿt.s*
> *rd.n(.i) pr wnnw ib.sn ḥtp*
> *iw sš.n(.i) bw-nfr ḫt sp3t.i*
> *ir.n(.i) mrt.n nb.i*
> (Anthes, 1928:28-29.no.12, 6-12))

> I have done Maat in my conduct,
> I probed the heart and assessed a payer by
> (his) wealth,
> I did what is praiseworthy to every person,
> known and unknown without distinction.
> I am one well-beloved in his district

> I did not pass over the need of a petitioner;
> I am a pleasant dwelling-place for his kindred,
> One who provides for his family so
>   that it has no trouble.
> I am son to the aged, father to the child,
> protector of the poor in every place.
> I fed the hungry and anointed the unannointed
> I gave clothing to the naked.
> I have exorcised the ailing face and
>   fought the smell,
> I am also one who buries the departed.
> I have judged a case by its rightness,
> and caused the trial partners to leave contented.
> I have spread goodness throughout my district
> and have done what my lord desired.

Central here is the focus on acting, doing good that cultivates and reaffirms a worthiness of character. Mbiti (1970:279) has argued that "the essence of African morality is that it is a morality of 'conduct' rather than a morality of 'being'." In other words, he contends, "a person is what he is because of what he does, rather than that he does what he does because of what he is." However, there is no real separation in conduct and character in African ethics. Rather, there is interrelatedness and interactiveness between the two. Thus, in Maatian ethics the deed is also central. But the deed is both rooted in and reflective of character. One must do Maat, speak Maat, practice Maat in one's conduct, for in doing so one cultivates and grounds the Maatian character. And it is one's character that in turn is the central motivation and basis of one's action. Repeatedly, Maatian moral literature states that the good deed is the will of God and essential to the creation and maintenance of the good person and the good society. There-

fore, in practicing Maat one creates and sustains a Maatian character. and this good character becomes instructive concerning the promise of one's good actions.

In addition to the emphasis on the deed evolving from its being seen as what God wills, it also emanates from the ancient Egyptian appreciation for its concrete benefits. Breasted (1934:27) exaggerates when he states that "the Egyptian . . .always thought in concrete terms and in graphic forms." But he is correct to state the tendency of the Egyptians to think most often in concrete terms, noting that the ancient Egyptian "thought not of theft but of a thief,not of love but a lover, not of poverty but of a poor man: he saw not social corruption but a corrupt society." What is true here is that ancient Egyptians did indeed think in concrete terms--not because they did not have abstract principles or could not think abstractly as some Egyptologists have argued, but because they had a cultural preference for the concrete and practical, just as there is a cultural preference among many, if not most, European intellectuals for the abstract. Maat is an abstract concept, but ultimately, it must have concrete meaning in practice, i.e., be a "lived concreteness". Practice, then, is stressed here over contemplation and the concrete over the abstract.

Morenz (1984:113) states that "Maat is both the task which man sets himself and also as righteousness the promise

and reward which awaits him on fulfilling it." The task, as mentioned above, is both one of cultivating the Maatian person and of creating the just and good society. This concern for the good society, and for quality relationships within it, is central to understanding both the moral concerns found in the Declarations of Innocence as well as in the moral ideal of ancient Egypt in general. For Maatian ethics and the thought and practice which is both rooted in and reflective of it is essentially communitarian. This means there is a continuing concern for right relations and obligations and the rightful expectations these relationships require and fulfill. These relationships based on Maat, are reciprocal relationships between God, humans and nature. And it is these relationships which reflect roles, identity, purpose and aspiration and define duty and obligation.

Kwame Gyekye (1987:155) has defined the social philosophy of communalism or the communitarian worldview as "the doctrine that the group (that is the society) constitutes the focus of the activities of the individual members of society." This communalism, a shared orientation of African societies, is rooted in an anthropology which poses humans as essentially social. This African view of the sociality of selfhood is shared in part by Aristotelian anthropology but conflicts with it in its metaphysical biology. It also conflicts with the anthropology of 17th century philosophers

like Hobbes and Locke, which posits a state of nature in which the individual stood solitary, alone and a bearer of a presocial character (Lemos, 1978). In Maatian anthropology, as in African anthropology in general, humans are born into a human society. Human sociality, in African anthropology, Gyekye (1987:155) contends, "is seen as a consequence of human nature but . . .also . . .as that which makes for personal well-being and worth."

Gyekye (1987:156) has argued correctly that "it is implicit in communalism that the success and meaning of the individual's life depends on identifying oneself with the group." Such identification, he contends, has three basic functions:

> 1) it "is the basis of the reciprocal relation between the individual and the group"; 2) "It. . .is the ground of the overriding emphasis on the individual's obligation to the members of the group, and it is a measure of <u>responsiveness</u> and <u>sensitivity</u> to the needs and demands of the group." (emphasis mine)

In addition, such an identification promises and promotes personal well-being. These concepts are evidenced in Maatian ethical literature throughout ancient Egypt as will be shown as the analysis proceeds.

6.6.2 The Communal Context

Assmann (LÄ IV:974) has noted concerning the person in Kemetic society that "Als Einzelwesen ist der Menschnicht lebenfähiq, er lebt in der und durch die Gemeinschaft." This essentially means that the Maatian community is a

participatory moral community. Here always the person-in-relationship, i.e., in family, community, society, is the center of focus as distinct from modern European individualism, in which the individual, abstract, autonomous and often alienated, is the essential focus and center of gravity. In Maatian ethics the sociality of selfhood is defined by roles and relationships and the practice attached to these roles. Self-development becomes a communal act, an act rooted in activity for and of the community. One, then, is not an individual, autonomous and alone, but a person interrelated and encumbered by the relations and demands of one's society.

The ancient Egyptian quest to be a worthy citizen (*nḏs iḳr*), then, becomes in such a context a metaphor for self-cultivation in community. And thus when one declares one's virtue as a "worthy citizen," one lists the roles one performs, the service one has offered and the character that has raised one high, caused one to be honored and caused one's name to last for eternity. The category of selfhood, then, is not an abstract concept to which one attaches qualities and rights, but is a person in practice or as the Egyptians said, "an excellent (or worthy) citizen who acted with his arm" (AEL I, 89).

In this regard, Pepiankh, chief justice and prime minister in the 6th Dynasty, says,

> I am one worthy before the king
> I am one worthy before the Great God

I am one worthy before the people.
I am one beloved of his father,
praised of his mother.
I am one beloved of his brothers and sisters.
I spent all my time that I spent in the
duty of the magistrate
While doing good and speaking what was loved
so that I might achieve a good character
before God
I judged between two so as to satisfy them
For I knew that it is what God wishes.
Never did pass the night angry with people
because of their behavior towards me.
- - - - - - - -
I come to it (my grave) as one old and
greatly good
having spent all my time among the living
in the shadow of my honor before the
king. (Urk. I:222.3-13, 223.4-6)

In the Intermediate Period, one finds a continuation of this focus and emphasis. The Butler Merer, states that he acted "as does a worthy citizen" serving and sustaining the people, speaking truth and doing justice and walking in the way of righteousness (Maat) (Schenkel, 1965:62-64.no.42). Likewise, the Treasurer Iti of Imyotru, in addition to defining himself as a "worthy citizen who acted with his arm" also states that he "was a great pillar in the Theban nome, a man of standing in the Southland" (AEL I:88-89).

In summary, then, for the ancient Egyptian: 1) society was the locus of meaning, the context in which the most significant human values are defined and achieved; 2) society was the center of the most important relationships and most relevant moral practices which were rooted in those relationships; and finally, 3) the Maatian society was not

simply a human construction, but also a participant in the in the divine and cosmic ideal and practice of Maat.

6.6.3 Life-Affirming Anthropology

It is important to note in conclusion that the anthropology of Maat is a positive and life-affirming anthropology. Assmann (1990:213ff; 1989b:60ff), however, has argued that Maatian anthropology is essentially a negative anthropology which evolved in the Middle Kingdom to justify the state and give ideological grounding to its absolutism. He also believes that this leads to a negative cosmology. But as I have presented evidence in chapter IV to the contrary, I will deal now only with claims he makes concerning the anthropology. He compares Maatian anthropology with what he poses as an Indian "law of the fishes" in which the big fish eat the little and only the state stands between the weak and the strong as posited in Lingat's (1973:207) discussion of kingship in India. Further, he argues that Kemetic anthropology is like that of Thomas Hobbes who describes the natural state of man as that of *bellum omnium contra omnes*--a war of all against all. And finally, he believes that CT 1130 and the "Klagen" texts (the Books of Contemplation) reveal that humans brought evil in the world and that isfet is in "the nature of the human heart."

However, there is no evidence in CT 1130 or in the Klagen for claiming that men are evil by nature. As Lichtheim (1992:47) states, although the Klagen

[e]xpress drastically man's potential for evil-doing they do not go beyond the basic recognition of man's dual nature, his capacity for good and evil which was expanded in all the literary genres.

Assmann (1990:58ff) on one hand posits the human capacity for Maat by defining the inner-directed person whose heart directs him to and in the way of Maat. But on the other hand, he (1990:216ff) states later that in Maatian anthropology, justice cannot be established in the human heart but must be established outside in the form of kingship. This, of course, goes against the conception, content and purpose of the Sebait as well as the DOV, the DOI and the Book of Khun-Anup, the fundamental texts in Maatian moral philosophy.

Moreover, there is no basis for Assmann's claim that Maatian anthropology reflects a "law of the fishes" as he presents the Indian or Hindu justification for "forceful government" (1989b:62). As Lichtheim (1992:47) again notes, the one text which presents anything like a "law of nature" does not have humans in such an antagonistic state. In the text (CT 80, II:42ff), the divine power Shu says,

> Falcons live (on) birds, jackals by wandering pigs in the desert, hippopotami in the marshes, people on grain, crocodiles on fish, fish in the waters which are in the Nile in accordance with the command of Atum that I should govern them and nourish them . . . . I nourish the fish and the snakes which are on the back of Geb (i.e, on earth).

Thus, humans are given no antagonistic role toward animals, birds, reptiles or each other. They are grain-eaters in the scheme of things here.

Likewise, Assmann's (1989b:61) interpretation of Unas' arrival in heaven after "having set Maat in the place of isfet in the Island of Flames" (PT 265) as a portrait of the world of the living is also open to challenge. In fact, the Island of Flames is not a projection of the world of the living "where the weak is always oppressed by the strong" as Assmann argues. Rather, it is especially in this case, better interpreted as the island which emerged in the midst of Nun, i.e., the site of primeval creation (Kees, 1942:41ff). Thus, Frankfort (1948b:154) states that it is an "allusion to the glow of that momentous sunrise of the First Day." Also, it is seen also as the birthplace of Ra, as a hymn to Osiris in the time of Ramesses IV indicates (Goff, 1979:31). In the Book of Vindication, it is the place where the deceased is transfigured and remains and thus, it is a dwelling place of the blessed dead. In fact, the text says, "opened to me are the gates of the otherworld to the beautiful ways by day in the direction of the Island of Fire which belongs to the righteous, at the place where the blessed spirits are" (CT I:344). It is not clear, then, how and why Assmann interprets this site of creation and blessed existence as the version of a Hobbesian state of nature with all its negative implications.

Also, Assmann does not offer adequate evidence for his use of Hobbes to characterize Kemetic anthropology. Hobbes (1949, 1909) lays out his political philosophy in two major works, De Cive or the Citizen (1642) and his most popular work, The Leviathan (1651). In his discussion of the concept of the state of nature, which is central to his concept of the origin of the state, Hobbes uses it in two basic ways. Lemos (1978:19) defines these uses as an "extended" and a "limited" one. He posits that in its extended sense, the term state of nature "refers to the total absence of all forms of settled human society." And "in the more limited sense it refers simply to the absence of sovereignty and civil society." Assmann seems to collapse these two and uses them to argue that they parallel the philosophical origins of the Kemetic state.

According to Hobbes, the state of nature is characterized by several major aspects. The first is the refusal of humans to recognize and accept authority over them. The second is a condition in which they all have equal power. This is qualified by the fact that though some may be stronger or shrewder than the other, their advantage is not sufficient to the degree that they can establish permanent and stable authority without consent. For the need to sleep and the fear from the others in one's vulnerability bring a crude equality of status. A third aspect of this condition is the refusal of the multitude of men to recognize and

accept another's authority. Fourthly, the condition is characterized as one of war of all against all and one in which human life is "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1909:97). Fifthly, key to the development of this state of things, according to Hobbes, is the fact that humans are essentially egoistic. This, he argues, is both natural and moral. Thus, he (1949:Ch.2,Sec. 8.2) says, "Whatsoever is voluntarily done is done for some good to him that wills it." And again, "of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some Good to himself" (Hobbes, 1909:103). Finally, Hobbes (1909:98) argues that in this state of nature "nothing can be Unjust" and "the notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place."

Given these fundamental aspects of Hobbesian anthropology and political philosophy concerning the origins of the state, it is clear that there is no parallel here between them and Maatian anthropology and the Maatian philosophy of state. First of all, Hobbes' philosophical assumptions are grounded in a psychological egoism which finds no parallel in Maatian philosophy. On the contrary, Maatian ethical philosophy is essentially communitarian and presupposes community as prior, not the individual. The individual, which Hobbes posits, is absent in Maatian anthropology. In Maatian anthropology, a person defines himself or herself by his/her roles and relations, i.e., as one honored before town, district, family, friends as well as before God. Thus, the

communitarian character of Maatian thought as opposed to 17th century European thought about the individual precludes a concept of a state of nature with its solitary and brutish character.

Moreover, Hobbes' description of humans as creatures whose life is a continuous struggle for "gain, diffidence--and glory" against each other--contrasts with the Maatian view of primordial society which was paradisiacal, not in a constant state of war. Theban Temple inscriptions in the Ptolemaic period describe this period as one in which happiness, law, justice and plenty reign. The texts say:

> Law was established in their time, Maat (justice, order, etc.) came down from heaven to earth in their age and united herself with those on earth. There was abundance on earth; stomachs were full and there was no lean year in the Two Lands. (Urk. VIII:76.92ff).

Although this is a narrative of primeval god-kings, it nevertheless poses a Maatian portrait of the earliest human society. Moreover, it is part of the political and religious doctrine of state, for the Kemetic kings regarded themselves as the embodiment and right successors of these god-kings in the form of Horus (Frankfort, 1948b).

Assmann's portraying of the Kemetic king as essentially as an agent of human order and justice á la Hobbes is also problematic for several reasons. First, it does not give adequate weight to the fact that the king's role is not simply to establish and maintain Maat on earth, but also in the cosmos. In a word, the king's role is cosmic as well as

earthly in Kemetic texts (Derchain, 1962). Secondly, the doctrine of kingship in Kemet, as in other African cultures, has not only has a political, spiritual and cosmic function but also a function in nature in which he acts as a channel through which the powers of nature flow to aid in bringing human effort to fruitful conclusion (Frankfort, 1948b:33-34). Thus, to portray the king in a limited and negative political role is to offer a reductive translation of his role which is essentially positive and not only political, but also spiritual, cosmic and nature-focused.

Thirdly, Assmann poses the bringing of Maat as a negative rather than positive process. He sees "judging people" (*wḏ' rmṯ*) by the king as essentially meaning "to establish equality among them, in order to protect the weak against the strong." In a word, he says, "Justice means protection" (Assmann, 1989b:60). Surely, this is a narrow view of the inclusive and expansive conception of Maatian justice which has been presented in the texts cited above in Chapters II and III. Maat as justice in these texts is clearly a multidimensional process and project. It includes among various other things an obligation to:

> Judge between two so that they are satisfied; not deprive an heir of his property; not tamper with the scales; not seize the property of anyone; not judging the blameless by the word of the liar; give to one you know like one you don't know; punish in accordance with the crime; uphold the laws; attend to the pleas of the needy person; be accurate like the scales, be patient in listening to concerns; vindicate the just; not take bribes; not to confuse a person in court nor put aside

> the just person; not to lean toward the rich and reject the poor, restrain the arms of the robber, be a sheltering refuge, a fundament that would never tilt; (and of course) give food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one.

Thus, Assmann has offered a limited concept of Maatian justice which finds little or no support in the basic ethical texts, i.e., the Sebait, the DOV, the DOI and the Book of Khun-Anup. Moreover, he has reductively translated care for the vulnerable as simply protection rather than in the more expansive way which is expressed in the moral texts also as giving, healing, sharing and moral sensitivity in various other forms (Roccati, 1982, 1988; AEL I, II, III; Schenkel, 1965; Jansen-Winkeln, 1985).

Finally, Assmann's Hobbesian analogy falls short also in that Hobbes' state of nature is based on the absence of compassion and benevolence which inform and undergird the Maatian conception of society in both primordial and post-primordial times. It is Hobbes' contention that our only reason for considering the interests of others is to avoid their hostility. This not only finds no parallel in Maatian ethical or political philosophy, but is also anti-Maatian in both concept and practice. Maat is pre-eminently other-directed, communitarian and humanistic (Daumas, 1962; Hornung, 1988). One of its definitions is reciprocity which as Assmann (1989a:40) himself has pointed out, is found in Neferhotep's statement that "The reward of one who acts consists in the fact that one will act for him. That is

Maat in the heart of God" (Helck, 1975:29). So Maat is at its center a positive reciprocity, based not on fear of hostility but on the mutual goodness it brings. Therefore, Taharqa says, "How good it is to act for one who acts. Happy is the heart of one who acts for one who has acted for him (Macadam, 1949 II:16, pl.8).

Maatian anthropology, then, contains no concept of evil by nature, as in some varieties of Judaism and Christianity, nor of a state of nature which reveals and reflects human egoism as natural and moral. On the contrary, Maatian ethics contains an anthropology which posits that only in community can one ultimately recognize, realize and reaffirm one's humanity. This is the central meaning of the Seal-Bearer, Neferyu's statement at the end of his moral presentation of good deeds when he says, "*iw niwt.i r ḏr.s m mtrw.i*--My whole town is my witness" (Hayes, 1990 I:fig.82). Clearly, Maatian anthropology recognizes human capacity for evil in its positing human nature as a dual character, i.e., the possibility of good and evil. But within this human nature which is, in reality, human possibility, the triumph of the good is perceived as assured. This has both to do with the ontological conception of the power of Maat and a positive anthropological conception of the human person-in-community.

VII

MAATIAN SOCIAL PRACTICE - I

7.1 Introduction

Definitions of Maat in Kemetic texts are most often general. Like philosophical concepts of the Good, the Right, the Beneficial, it allows for a broad range of meanings. In the texts it is often defined or rather described by a delineation of things to be done and to be avoided. Thus, in the Old Kingdom documents cited above in chapter II, we see that Maat is speaking truth, doing justice, not doing what is harmful to people, serving the state, district and city, not stealing, not using force, loving good, hating crookedness and evil, making a tomb by rightful means, not speaking evil or falsehood, speaking good and repeating good, caring for the vulnerable and needy, wanting good for the people and similar moral deeds and aspirations.

However, Maat is defined directly in only a few cases. First, it is defined in the autobiography of Seshem-Nefer

(Urk. I:57.14-15) in the 5th Dynasty as both "What God loves, wills and wishes" and "the Good." He says:

> *ḏd(.i) m3ʿt mrrt Nṯr nb rʿ*
> *bw nfr pw*
>
> I spoke Maat which is what God loves,
> wishes and wills
> It is the Good.

The verb *mr*, as indicated above, means love, will and wish. Therefore, Maat is what God loves, wills or wishes. Other DOV reaffirm this and it is knowledge of this that leads others to say I did Maat which God loves. The further definition of Maat as "the Good" is important also because it adds another warrant for the practice of Maat, i.e., it is the Good. In this sense, it is the ground of human flourishing as this interpretation is reaffirmed in the major Kemetic moral texts, i.e., the Sebait, the DOI, the DOV and the Book of Khun-Anup.

It is important to note that Sesehm-Nefer says in the context of his declaration of Maat-speaking that he "used to tell the king what was useful for the people--*wn ḏd(.i) ḫr nswt 3ḫ(.t) n rmṯ*." This suggests that Maat is also what is useful for (or serves) the people. Such an assumption is supported by the bulk of Declarations of Virtue and the Declarations of Innocence which are directed toward doing that which served the people. The verb *3ḫ* may be here translated as "be useful" or "serve." In any case, he speaks to the human focus of the ethical vision. Given this, it could be assumed that one can equate Maat with

human good. But that would, of course, limit Maat as a holistic good which benefits not only the human, but also the Divine and the natural.

Seshem-Nefer says Maat is the Good *(bw nfr)*. His refusal to limit it to one area of focus reflects its inclusive character. This is so in spite of the fact that Maatian ethics, as a rule, like most ethics, focuses on what humans are to do with each other. However, this focus is not exclusive of concern with one's relationship to God and nature. On the contrary, moral considerations in these areas are interrelated in an inextricable way. Thus, the ongoing challenge is not to give priority to one area of moral concern and then deal with the other later. Rather, it is to recognize their indissoluble unity and interrelatedness and to do Maat in all areas of moral concern. This is what is meant by the declarations of virtue which say "I have done what people love and the divine ones praise" and "I have done what people speak of (praise) and that which satisfies God." And both of these concerns as the DOI show involved concern for moral relations with nature.

A second place in which a direct definition of Maat is given is in the 13th Dynasty in a text of King Neferhotep at Abydos. It says:

> *mtnwt ir m irt.n(.f)*
> *M3't pw ḥr ib n Nṯr* (Helck, 1975:29.40)
>
> The reward of one who acts is in what is done for him
> This is Maat in the heart of God.

Maat is defined here as the practice of reciprocity, as acting for one another in mutually beneficial ways. This reciprocity clearly applies to both relations between humans and the Divine and relations between humans and humans. But as I argue below, it implicitly and of necessity applies also to relations between humans and nature.

The three major areas of Maatian moral concern then are: relations with God, others and nature. And within the context of these three areas of moral practice, social practice stands as a pivotal point and process between what is done for God and what is done for nature. It links them and becomes the fundamental way to understand and carry out duties toward God and duties toward nature. As we shall see, in Maatian ethics, one serves God in a most definitive sense by serving others, especially the most vulnerable. And to act morally toward nature is to engage in a certain kind of social practice in relation to it especially one of reciprocity and restraint.

Thus, as both ideal and action, the essence and meaning of Maat is revealed and expressed in social practice which in a real sense defines and gives substance to our moral relations with God and nature. One must begin by doing Maat with and for others, for to do Maat, *irt M3't*, is at the same time to create Maat (*sḫpr M3't*) and thus, increase Maat in the world. Thus, the scribe Djehuti-Nakht-Ankh begins his moral self-presentation by saying "*iw ir.n(.i) M3't m*

sšm.i --I did Maat in my conduct" (Anthes, 1928:28.no.12.6). Maat is, of necessity, an ongoing project, a constant and committed activity. It is in this sense that the prime minister Rekhmira says of Maat-doing during his tenure of office that as captain of the ship of state:

> I knew not sleep day or night. Whether I stood or sat, my heart was set upon the prow rope and the stern rope. And the sounding pole was never idle in my hand. I was watchful for any chance of stranding. (Davies, 1973:pl.xi, 17)

This concept of being alert to the demands of Maat-doing day and night is clearly a metaphor for ongoing concern for the moral, for being both aware of it and practicing it. This is further emphasized by the following statement that the sounding pole was never idle in his hands.

This "day and night" metaphor of constant moral concern for and practice of Maat lasts through the Late Period. Therefore, the priest, Sishu, says "I filled my heart with God's way. . . .I lay down with his might in my heart and I rose up doing the will of his ka. I did Maat and I hated falsehood. For I knew he lives by it (Maat) and is satisfied by it" (Lefebvre, 1923 II:83.4-5). Likewise, the metaphor "stand and sit" which in one sense, as in Kagemni (II, 5) and Ptahhotep (221), means "conduct oneself," has the added meaning here of continuous and varied action. Rekhmira is concerned here with emphasizing both the continuous duration of his action as well as the varied circumstances

in which it occurred. Thus, he says that his Maat-doing was both day and night and whether standing or sitting.

Moreover, Rekhmira further describes his Maat-doing by giving it a space dimension which is both geographical and social. First, he says "I exalted Maat to the height of heaven. I caused her goodness to circulate over the breath of the earth/land so that she might come to rest in the people's nostrils like the north wind" (Davies, 1973:pl.xi. 19-20). The exalting of Maat is an emphasis on both the priority he gives it as well as an indication that he is doing Maat, active in embodying it and expressing it. The next line in which he says he spread Maat over the earth or land (*t3*) is a reaffirming and expansion of an earlier moral claim by Djehuti-Nakht-Ankh who says "I have spread goodness (*bw nfr*) throughout my district. And I have done what my lord loves (Anthes, 1928:29.16). And, of course, what his lord loves, whether it is reference to God or king, is Maat.

Maat in the ethical texts, then, is posed as life-giving (breath to the nose), as life-affirming (mighty, great, enduring) and as a sure path to worthiness in this life and the next. Thus, Maat is defined as the way of life (*w3t nt 'nḫ*) and alternately as the good way (*w3t nfr*) and the way of God (*w3t nt Nṯr*). To flourish, then, one must embrace it and walk in its way from one's youth to one's passing in peace to the Otherworld. This walking in the way of Maat is in the final analysis, a social practice, a

practice in a definite tradition, and a definite moral and social community.

In this chapter and the next, I will discuss Maat as essentially a social practice of doing good and seeking worthiness. To do this, I will delineate and discuss essential concepts which inform and explicate this practice: way of life, location, tradition, worthiness, relationality and responsibility and character. Also within this theoretical framework, I will use the central Maatian concept of *im3ḫ* (worthiness) to critically articulate Maatian practice as an on-going activity to stand worthy in these interlocking and interrelated positions before God, before others and before nature.

7.2 The Maatian Way of Life

From the earliest texts of the Old Kingdom through the texts of the Late Period, Maat is posed as a way of life or path of life (*w3t; mit; or mṯn*). In fact, Ptahhotep describes Maat as "a way even before the ignorant--*sw3t pw m ḥr n ḫm ḫt*" (92,L2). This suggested both its availability to all and its mandatory character. Humbert (1929) and Couroyer (1949) have called attention to this and compared it to a similar and later concept in Hebrew ethical and religious literature. Helck (LÄ III:1117) has also defined Maat as a "Weg des Lebens" and pointed to its stress on balance, impartiality and commitment to correct governance. As a way of life, Couroyer (1949:45) notes, Maat is essen-

tially "a general conduct in life, a conduct which conforms to the demands of God, that is to say to engage in the practice of works of benevolence and piety which permits in all humbleness one to pose oneself as a model for future generations."

This means on one level that Maat, for the ancient Egyptians, "was a basic value, a general norm" (Morenz, 1984:117). Thus, "If someone gives specific instructions about some line of conduct, he does so only in the spirit of Maat, not in conformity with some precise legalistic wording." However, the Sebait do offer specific teachings which are definite rules informed by the general concept of Maat as a way of life. This is clear in Ptahhotep's introduction which poses the instructions as knowledge which informs the unaware, makes the student into a moral exemplar "for the children of the great" teaches obedience and devotion and "the standard of excellent discourse" (Ptahhotep 30-48). The Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara in the Intermediate Period is expressly designed as an instruction for both righteous governance and life and a call to "do justice that you may endure on the earth" (Kheti, 46-47).

This stress on Maat as a way of life is reaffirmed in the Middle Kingdom Sebait of Dua-Khety for his son Pepi (Helck, 1970). In summing up his teaching, he says "*mk rdi.n.i tw ḥr w3t nṯr*--Behold, I have placed you on the way of God" (11,1). Given this, he continues, "Praise God for

your father and your mother who set you on the path of life. This is what I have put before you, your children and their children" (11,4) (emphasis mine). Here we see also the development of the interchangeable use of *w3t nṯr* (the way of God) and *w3t n ʿnḫ* (the way of life). This interchangeable use of will lasts through the Late Period and finds its most definitive expression in the Petosirian texts (Lefebvre, 1923).

Certainly in the New Kingdom, the Book of Amenomope stands out as a definitive instruction in the way of life. In fact, Amenomope describes his teaching as such saying that it is "a teaching for life" and "an instruction for well-being." Moreover, he says that it is "to direct one on the paths of life" and "make him prosper on earth" (1,1-12). Thus, Amenomope seeks to offer an inclusive list of lessons on how to live righteously and effectively so that one might prosper. For he says, "If you do good you will prosper" (XVII, 5). Moreover, if you do good for the vulnerable and needy," you will find it a path of life" (emphasis mine). And "after sleep, when you wake in the morning you will find it as goodness." "For better is praise with the love of people than wealth in the storehouse" (Amenomope, XVI,8-12).

In addition to the Sebait of Amenomope, royal texts as well as texts of other scribes and government officials which reaffirm Maat as the way of life which causes human

flourishing. In his, Edict on Justice, King Horemheb (Urk. IV: 2155.9--2157.19) says:

> *mtr.n.i st r mtn ʿnḫ sšm st r bw m3ʿ*
>
> I have directed them to the way of life.
> I have lead them to Maat. (emphasis mine)

Also, the scribe, Akhtoy, offers a beautiful description of the way or path of life which Maat represents and embodies. He (Gardiner, 1935 II:pl. 20,6.3-5) says:

> I spread out (*pḏ*) my Instructions before you.
> I bear witness to you concerning the way of life (*w3t n ʿnḫ*).
> I set you on a path that is painless.
> A palisade which protects against the crocodile.
> A good and pleasant light, a shade without heat.
> Act then, accordingly so that your name may be recognized.
> And that you may reach the West.

It is important to note that this praise for the way of life ends with an instruction to act according to the Instruction so that one may be praised among people and reach the place of immortality. For it reflects both the life-giving nature of Maat in this world and the next. The text goes on to urge against fatalism, which poses one as trapped by fate and nature. It is, the text says, good instruction which poses a path of life which causes one "to know Maat in your heart" and "do what is righteous in your sight" (6,5-9).

This perception and teaching of Maat as a way of life continues through the Late Period of ancient Egyptian history. And we read in a text of the Thirtieth Dynasty by the priest, Sishu, father of Petosiris, High Priest of Djehuti

another appeal to follow Maat as a way of life as noted above. Thus he says:

> O you who are alive on earth, and you who shall be born, who come to this desert, who come to this tomb and pass by it. Come let me lead you on the <u>way of life</u> that you may sail with a good wind and not get stranded. That you may reach the abode of generations without coming to grief. (Lefebvre, 1924:83.2-3) (emphasis mine)

He also speaks of the path of life as the "path of God" and offers a model of practicing Maat throughout his life. He says, "I have come to this city of eternity. Having done good on earth. Having filled my heart with the way of God from my youth to this day" (4-5).

Also, in the Late Period the Lady Tahabet poses Maat as a way of life saying, "Come, I will guide you on the way of (*w3t nt M3'*t), the good route of one who follows God. Blessed is one whose heart leads him (her) to it" (Budge, 1896: 131.13-132). She too speaks of Maat as lived concreteness, concrete deeds that give focus, function and fruitfulness to life as presented in chapter III. Both Lady Tahabet's and Sishu's Declaration of Virtue demonstrate the continuity of the ancient Egyptian moral ideal with its continuing consciousness of judgment and justification and its commitment to Maat, especially doing justice, speaking truth and walking in the way of righteousness.

Maatian ethics, as a way of life, a cooperative project of moral living is informed by the central concepts of <u>location</u>, <u>tradition</u>, <u>relationality</u> and <u>character</u>. The essential

thrust is to locate oneself in a definite moral community and tradition, to extract from both community and tradition grounding and guidelines for living a full and meaningful life in relationship and responsibility, and to cultivate the character or ethical substance to achieve this.

In a discussion of the task of living a full and meaningful life, Frantz Fanon suggested three fundamental questions which he argued everyone must eventually ask (Gendzier, 1973:3). These questions strike a responsive cord in Maatian ethics for they speak to issues familiar in this tradition, i.e., issues of identity in community--both moral and social, authenticity of social and moral claims and quality of one's moral and social practice in light of one's identity and claims. These fundamental Fanonian questions are: "Who am I; am I really who I am and am I all I ought to be?" The first question is a question of identity. In a word, who am I-in-community? For I know myself in relation, not in isolation. I am a place-holder in a definite community and tradition and from this context and the relations those contain, I know myself. As Mbiti (1970:141) notes, the most definitive statement of such a communal concept of identity is "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." He concludes, "this is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man." This, of course, clearly differs from the Descartian proposition that "I think therefore I am." For in a communitarian concept of

self, one is not identified with one's capacity to think but one's capacity for and contribution to social life.

Thus, in the Maatian tradition, one always identifies himself or herself in relationship and service. In her moral self-presentation, Lady Taniy says that she is "valuable because of her Maat," i.e., the truth she speaks and the justice she does for state and society. And Lady Tahabet defines herself as one who cared for the vulnerable, who was kind to her family and "who was united in heart with the people of her city" (Budge, 1896:132.15-16).

Fanon's second question is a question of authenticity. To ask: "am I really who I am" is to ask "how real are my moral and social claims as measured by my practice?" In other words, the question is "does my self-definition coincide with my practice and my community's evaluation of me? It is in this context that one says after a declaration of virtue "*ḏd.f mdt M3ʿt*--the words he speaks are true" (Urk. VII:18.3). Or again, the person seeking or having received the communal evaluation says, "My whole town is my witness--*iw niwt.i r ḏr.s m mtrw.i* " (Hayes, 1990:Fig.82; Schenkel, 1965:no.26). It is likewise the reason that one seeks to do that which pleases people and what the divine one's favor. Therefore, the steward Amenhotep (Urk. IV:1799.8) says that he is "one who knows his God and exalts his goodness." He also says he is "a truly upright man who has done what pleases people and what the divine ones favor."

Finally, Fanon's third question: "am I all I ought to be?" is a question of realizing one's full social and moral potential. In other words, given who I am, based on my rootedness in family and community and given the standard of Maat by which I and others measure me, am I doing all that is worthy of me? For not only am I morally compelled by my conception of myself (i.e., a Maatian person) to be rule-abiding and rule-responsible, but I am also and especially compelled to be morally sensitive to others, i.e., responsive and responsible to others. It is in this context then that the concepts of location and tradition become essential and instructive.

7.2.1 Location: The Communal Context

The ancient Egyptians understood themselves morally and socially as members of a definite society, whose narrative they both shared and shaped. Thus, their morality was essentially and ultimately a communal act of exchange rather than a quest for inner spirituality. It was a practice of right in relationship and community, not an inner directed thrust to discover self. In this context a person begins his/her moral self-presentation by locating him/herself in community. A standard declaration of virtue was:

> I have gone from my town
> I have descended from my district
> I spoke truth there
> I did justice there (Urk. I:48.8-9)

Therefore, the goodness done is in a definite context and for a definite people who are both recipients and evaluators

of this good. And it is for this reason that one notes that his town loves him and bears witness to his good. It is also in this context that one strives to be able to say by his good deeds that he is honored before God, king and the people and beloved to the members of his family (Urk. I: 222.3-7).

Here it is important to make a distinction between the African anthropological concept of person-in-community and the modern European concept of the autonomous individual. The concept of individuality in European culture with its autonomy, isolation, alienation and ultimate abstraction, is incompatible with African thought in general and ancient Egyptian thought in particular. There is no "contingent existence" for the human person as posited by Heller (1990: 55) who contends that the modern person is "thrown into the world" without telos and is essentially a detached "cluster of possibilities" who must "choose himself" to avoid imposition by others. Rather Maatian ethics posits an embedded existence, a life rooted in community which represents a web of interdependency, including duties, rightful expectations, obligations and shared aspirations. The need then is to act in such a way that you earn the love and praise of God and people. Thus, Intef, son of Tjefi says:

> I have come from my town
> I have descended from my district
> I have done what people praise and the
> divine ones love, having given bread
> to the hungry, clothes to the naked.
> (Schenkel, 1965:236-238.no.380)

Again, one is concerned with one's worthiness in one's town, concerned with doing what the people love and God praises. And finally, there is also a value for not only doing good for one's town but also for constantly seeking it out so that one may do it. Therefore, Nebneteru says, "I searched for what was good for my city in my time" (Legrain, 1914 III:58.pl.32).

In this context a distinction can be made again between communal and individual ethics. Here one is reminded of Hegel's development of the distinction between _Sittlichkeit_ and _Moralität_. _Moralität_ is essentially an equivalent of the English word morality and has a general character. But _Sittlichkeit_ is more particular and " . . .refers to the moral obligations I have to an ongoing community of which I am a part, . . .obligations (which) are based on established norms and uses" (Taylor, 1980:83). It poses the culmination of moral life in community where it is grounded and receives its content. This, again, contrasts with Kant's ethics where "the obligation holds of me not in virtue of being a part of a larger community life, but as an individual rational will." This, then, is the ethic of the individual as distinct from the ethic of the community which poses society as the locus and ground of moral life. As Taylor (1980:84) notes, Hegel draws here from Greek ethics with its emphasis on the Greek polis,

> where-it was believed-men had seen the collective life of their city as the essence and meaning of

> their lives, had sought glory in its public life, their rewards in power and reputation within it and immortality in its memory.

Such a concept clearly coincides with the civic virtue ethics of ancient Egypt.

The Declarations of Virtue have, at their core, evidence of the profound attachment ancient Egyptians had to their city, their district and the larger Egyptian community, i.e., the Egyptian state, personified in the pharaoh. Thus, the Sixth Dynasty Declaration of Virtue of Nefer-Seshem-Ra (Urk. I:198-200), which is typical in both focus and stress, begins with the statement, "I have come from my city, I have descended from my district." A similar beginning is found also in other declarations like that of Harkhuf, Count and Governor of Upper Egypt as noted in chapter II (Urk. I:120-131). Continuing, Nefer-Seshem-Ra notes, his service to the ruler of the city and district saying "I have done justice for its lord. I have satisfied him with what he loves . . .I spoke truly and did right (Maat)." He goes on to list other virtues and acts such as showing preference to the vulnerable, judging fairly, honoring the elderly and being one beloved of his family. In a word, he delineates what he has done good in his community.

This tradition and focus continue throughout the Late Period. Thus, Djedkhonsefankh, Prophet of Amun-Ra (Janssen, 1955), writes that he was a man of character and compassion,

a righteous man who brought honor to his parents because of his worthiness, who was "constant in lending grain to the Thebans (his towns people) and in nourishing the poor of my town," one who forgave debts of the poor and bought their goods "paying two and three times their worth." Likewise, Count Nebneteru says, "I was one unique and excellent, great in his town, much esteemed in the temple" (Legrain, 1914, pl.32).

And Harwa, the High Steward (Gunn, 1934:135-142), states:

> I am one beloved of his city, praised of his district, kindhearted to his town. I have done what people love and the divine ones praise, . . .one who gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, removed pain and suppressed wrongdoing, who buried the revered ones, supported the aged and removed the need of the have-nots. (One who was) a shelter for the child and helper for the widow.

He ends by saying,

> I did these things knowing their worth from the Lord of Things. (To wit:) to abide in the mouth of the people forever; to be well remembered in the years that follow. (Gunn, 1934:137.C-57)

This last statement is indicative of the concern for immortality both through the passage to Amenta (the Otherworld) and through living in the minds and hearts of the people. Again, the communal context is where one practices Maat and lays the basis for immortality in memory and in the life of the Otherworld.

From a Maatian standpoint, one is able to concede that each generation must develop its ethics out of its own

experience. If by this meant out of one's own narrative and needs, in a word, out of one's own tradition. However, if one means we have to create without regard to tradition and only out of the social circumstances which confront us, then such a contention is not supportable in Maatian ethics. For indeed conceptualization and justification suggest a tradition in which to carry on such a discourse and from which to borrow and build on appropriate insights. The individual, then, is essentially a 17th century European construction; the person-in-community with a definite history is an ancient and ongoing anthropological and cultural reality. This, of course, does not mean that the person-in-community is imprisoned by past and present circumstance. On the contrary, communitarian ethics and worldview are not a denial or negation of the person qua person. It is rather a recognition of and creative response to the limited possibilities of the isolated individual (Gyekye, 1987: 156).

It is through membership in a moral community and rightful social participation in that community that one learns to be a person of character and flourishes as a result of it. For it is in community that we develop our sense of the moral self, learn to honor our obligations, cherish our relations and do our duty in correspondence to our conception of moral worthiness. Thus, we value the communal context, for as Fincoffs (1986:52) states, "to whatever extent we value these qualities of persons and common

life, we will value the conditions that make them possible." And this speaks to both the essentiality of community and tradition.

7.2.2 The Ground of Tradition

It is important to note here that this moral self-understanding of the ancient Egyptians and of the modern advocates of Maatian ethics both presuppose and necessitate the existence and consciousness of tradition as well as a community in which to practice it. MacIntyre (1981, 1990) has argued that genuine moral inquiry requires membership in a particular kind of moral community. This, of course, is no less a requirement for moral self-understanding. As MacIntyre (1990:142) states, " . . . the enquiries of the individual moral life are continuous with those of past tradition and the rationality of that life is the rationality both embodied in and transmitted through tradition." Moreover, he (1981:216) says, "I can only answer the question 'what am I to do?' If I can ask the prior question 'of what story of stories do I find myself a part?'" The ordinary person who raises the question of what is a good life, then, does not start ab novo, but raises that question and related ones in the context of a definite tradition and of reflection on that tradition.

Certainly, Maatian ethics is marked by its strong and profound reverence for tradition and the past. This was expressed in terms of both ancestor and elder veneration and

a profound respect for ancient knowledge and achievement. Teeter (1990:1) has noted that "[w]ith Maat's emphasis on tradition and unchanging values, it provided the sense of continuity which insure permanence of many features of ancient Egyptian culture." But in addition to Maat's providing a sense of continuity and permanence, it, as noted above, also provided a framework for moral reasoning and moral self-understanding. In Maatian sacred literature, there are abundant models of virtue from the past used to instruct. Gardiner (1964:56) makes the point that "one of the most characteristic traits of the Egyptian habit of mind" is the "extraordinary attachment to the traditional as opposed to the actual." In fact, he continues, "No other people has shown a greater reverence for what was by them termed 'the time of the ancestor,' . . ." especially the Old Kingdom, the consolidation period of the Kemetic state. These periods were ideal points of reference, and it is from and by these that their concepts of morality, the just society, the will of God, etc., evolve and are justified.

In the Sebait, the past and tradition are appealed to and consulted. And in these and other literature, the solution to moral, technical, and other kinds of problems were ultimately solved by reference to and building on the past. In the Sebait of Ptahhotep (29-39), the prime minister, asks that he be allowed to appoint his son as successor "so as to tell him the words of those who heard the ways of

the ancestors and who have listened to the divinities." And the king replies to Ptahhotep saying, "instruct him then in the sayings of the past. And may he become a model for the children of the great." Thus, the value of tradition is reaffirmed here. It is called "the ways of the ancestors" (*sḫrw imyw ḥ3t*) and is further grounded by its being defined as the words of those who heard and "who listened to the divinities." Tradition here is both instructive and sacred.

King Kheti in his instructions for his son, Merikara, also stresses the value of studying and learning tradition. He says: that for the wise man "Maat comes to him distilled, shaped in the sayings of the ancestors." Therefore, he says, "Emulate (*sni*) your fathers, your ancestors. For tasks are carried out through knowledge. Behold their words endure in books. Open and read them and emulate their wisdom" (Merikara, 34-36). Maat, then, is for the wise person, distilled and shaped in the context of the teachings of the ancestors. Thus, one is morally and intellectually compelled to study their works and follow their example. Wisdom here is moral wisdom in the service of society. As Bergman (1976:37) points out, it was a fundamental thrust of Kemetic society "to preserve the inherited tradition by transmitting it as an eternal heritage in the manner of a testament from one generation to another without interruption."

Tradition also serves the function of legitimation. It is in this context that the process of archaization, claiming an older, usually ancient past takes root and flourishes (Brunner, 1970). A classic claim for authority and authenticity is "*iw gm.n.tw.s m sšw isw*--it was found in the ancient writings." Here the idea of moral or theological inquiry and exposition become more an act of recovery than discovery. Thus, the Shabaka Text although clearly a new development of old ideas, is said to be "a work of the ancestors." But it is also said that the text "was worm eaten, so that it could not be understood from beginning to end." Given this, the prefatory statement of the text continues, stating that King Shabaka copied it anew making it better than before. This he does to make his name and monument last for eternity (L.2). Here, then, preservation of a document of tradition for posterity, or more generally, preservation of tradition itself has both moral and spiritual implications. For the preservation is clearly considered a good deed which promises immortality.

A second point of significance here is how tradition is reaffirmed and expanded at the same time. For Shabaka does not simply recover or restore this text, he makes it "better than it had been before." Clearly, on one hand this is a reference to the physical condition of the text. But on the other hand, the claim carries with it a suggestion that the text itself is refined or expanded. For if the text "could

not be understood from beginning to end," there were not only physical gaps in it but, of necessity, also conceptual gaps which were occasioned by the physical ones. Shabaka, then, not only recovers and restates the Memphite tradition, he also explicates and expands it.

It is at this point that one sees the moral imperative to restore the ideals and achievements of the past. In fact, restoration, although often conceived of by some authors as simply an artistic or architectural restoration of temples and pyramids, is more definitively, a moral obligation and an act of ritual. Therefore, king and priest alike demonstrate the strong grip of the past in both the moral and historical sense and seek to preserve it by constantly restoring it and making it even better. In addition to the Shabaka Text, which King Shabaka restored, Ram Roy, High Priest of Amen, in a commemorative inscription recounts how he restored the Temple of Amen after it was in ruins, making it more spacious, raising it and ". . .making it better than before" (BAR III:268-269).

Also, Queen Hatshepsut, after having restored what the Aamu invaders who ruled Egypt in its chaos had destroyed, writes, "I have restored that which was in ruins; I have raised up that which was destroyed when the Aamu were in the midst of Kemet, overthrowing that which had been made as they ruled without Ra" (Urk. IV:390.5-9). It is here that the religious and moral implications begin to appear. For

Hatshepsut is not simply restoring temples, books, cities, etc.; she is in a larger sense restoring order in society and the cosmos and thus, Maat. For one of the most fundamental understandings of Maat, as stated above, is cosmic and social order which are inextricably lined. Finally, on another level, restoration as a moral and ritual act is a reenactment of Ra's creation at the first time. It is pushing back chaos and disorder, and establishing order and rightness in the cosmos and society. It is, in a word, acting like Ra, i.e., creatively and righteously, which is a fundamental concept in the philosophical anthropology of Maat.

It is important to stress here that the Maatian commitment to tradition is not a reactionary desire to return to and/or restore some past regime. For there is no historical evidence of this. It is rather a constant thrust to be in harmony with the religio-historical and ethical paradigm of the Maatian society. Here Chan's (1984) observations in this regard on Chinese respect for paradigms of the past are instructive. Chan (1984:424ff), building on Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics on tradition, argues that the concept of tradition can be either a "form of authority" or a "source of truth." "Tradition as a form of authority," he notes, is "seen to be diametrically opposed to freedom and reason." But what he argues, along with Gadamer, is that "there is no intrinsic opposition between reason and

tradition." In fact, tradition, rightly conceived, "serves to provide a horizon from which we may view the world." Given this, "the past, then is not the 'no-longer;' it is not some 'thing' we can reconstruct methodologically or experience in a flight of fancy."

On the contrary, "the past and present are constantly merged in the experience of understanding." And thus, tradition becomes "the ground of understanding." This, he concludes, "is what Gadamer means by the principle of 'effective history'," and it is this effective history and respect for it that Chan sees in the _Analects_ of Confucius. For it is an appreciation of tradition which not only yields knowledge but requires an understanding which involves initiative and interpretation. As Confucius (_Analects_, 2:11) observed, "A man who reviews the old so as to find out the new is qualified to teach others" (Lau, 1979). In this same way, the Sebait and other ethical literature teach the past as a source of wisdom and practical example. But these experiences and lessons of the past are merged with the realities and insights of the present to form a more inclusive and profound moral and self-understanding. Tradition is a ground of understanding insofar as it merges the past and present in a meaningful discourse involving both reception and interpretation, inherited experience and an understanding born of initiative and the constant quest for new and deeper insights.

The question is thus posed, how does this affect the human person's right and ability to deny society ultimate authority? Maatian ethics grants authority to persons to criticize the established order for its moral failure as is attested to in the Books of Contemplation, i.e., Neferti, Khakheper-Ra-Soneb and Ipuwer. But the ground of such criticism is the Maatian tradition itself and its paradigm of a just and good society. Thus on one hand, the Maatian vision applied to Kemetic society, did not seek to overthrow the established order when it was in contradiction, but to rectify it by restoring Maat as exemplified in a paradigmatic age. Therefore, the ancient Maatian moral vision, like the Confucian moral vision, was in great part an attempt to come to grips with the "problem of how one humanizes the exercise of authority and inequalities of social power" which to this day "remains with us whatever we may think of (the) solutions" (Schwartz, 1985:70). This, of course, is no apology for either Confucian or Maatian ethics, which need none either in terms of their own internal logic or in critical comparison with religious ethics of the three major revealed faiths which themselves shelter race, class and sexual biases. It is rather an attempt to understand these ethics in their own terms and contexts, rather than reductively translate them as simply class-supporting or myth-sheltering enterprises--a charge which of course can be and has been raised against the _soi-_

disant revealed religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

A second approach to denial of ultimacy to the state is found most clearly in the criticism of foreign rulers. But again the criticism is grounded in the Maatian tradition and speaks more to a violation of that tradition than a need to challenge or change it. Thus, Hatshepsut's assertion that she restored (*srwḏ*) what was in ruins and destroyed when the Hyksos "ruled without Ra" is a criticism of an un-Maatian circumstance (Urk. IV:390.5-9). To rule without Ra is to rule outside the Maatian framework. For she says "he did not act according to the divine command until my majesty" (Urk. IV:390.10). We can strike the last part, "until my majesty" which is more boast than history, for it is Ahmose who finally drove out the Hyksos. However, the claim that the Hyksos ruler "did not act according to the divine command" is very important. For it is the theoretical and ethical basis for criticism of his rule. Moreover, Hatshepsut suggests she acted to restore in the spirit and knowledge that "There will never be a destruction of what Amen has commanded" (Urk. I:391.1). Thus, Maatian rule is linked to the command of God. And there is no discourse on changing an existing society, only on restoring one ruined by those who "ruled without Ra."

This is also the case with Tutankhamun's restoration. Inherent in his moral and political claims, which cannot

really be separated, is a criticism of the previous government of Akhenaton. In fact, Akhenaton is seen as outside the realm of Maat and is associated with isfet, i.c., chaos and wrong. It is in this context that it is said of Tutankhamun:

> He restored what was in ruins . . .He drove isfet from the Two Lands. Maat was established in its place. He made lies an abomination. And the land is as it was the first time. (Urk. IV:2026. 16-19)

Clearly, this reference to "the first time" represents the paradigmatic realm of Maat established the Creator himself. But as to the criticism, it is, like Hatshepsut's, post facto, and does not offer a model of internal criticism during a given reign.

The Persian and Greek periods of conquest represents the best examples of criticism of existing governments. In the so-called Demotic Chronicles, the themes that successful kingship only comes through observance of Maat is central and continuing (Spielberg, 1914). Maat here is referred to as both *hp*, law, and *mit p3 Nṯr*, the way of God, both terms which were used earlier in Kemetic history to indicate Maat (Nims, 1948; Lloyd, 1982:43). This text provides not only a clear criticism of foreign rulers but also suggests a similar criticism of Kemetic kings who fail to respect the divine will. For example, it is said of Hakaris "He was overthrown because he abandoned the Law and did not have concern for his brothers" (Demotic Chronicle, Col. IV:9-19).

In the Sebait, Merikara had also suggested punishment for kings who commit moral offenses, but it stood as a rare and unrepeated admission of both fault and punishment (Merikara, 119-123).

Still, there is inherent in the very concept of the paradigmatic Maatian society the ground and framework for not only denying a given society moral ultimacy, but also proposing its alternative. It is, in fact, this inherent power of criticism and alternative proposal that informs the literature discussed above. And it is important to note it first evolves in the First Intermediate Period when there is an expanded conception of both Maat and the Maatian society. Ancient Maatian texts clearly privilege tradition--both moral and political. But again, the concept of the ideal Maatian society becomes a fundamental ground for criticism of its isfetic opposite and for posing an alternative paradigm of the conditions and possibilities of human flourishing.

The challenge, then, is for adherents of modern Maatian ethics not to blindly accept or blindly reject tradition, but to constantly explore it for new insights in light of current needs and understanding. In this way the authority of tradition does not become a substitute for one's moral reasoning, but a central aspect of it. For as Gadamer (1975:247) argues, if the "prestige of authority" within a tradition "takes the place of one's own judgment, the

authority is in fact a source of prejudices." But on the other hand, an uncritical rejection of authority or tradition is not productive either. For raising oneself above history and making oneself autonomous from tradition is neither possible nor necessary (Stout, 1981:228ff). Again, the challenge is to constantly and critically engage tradition and make it live and respond effectively in a dialectic of <u>preservation</u> and <u>expansion</u>. Gadamer (1975:247) has rightly noted that the process of preservation itself "is an act of reason." It is often, as he says, "inconspicuous" but nevertheless requires an engagement and inquiry in various ways. And it is in this process of engagement that a tradition reveals its resourcefulness and limitations and thus challenges its members to constantly recover its best and build on it generation after generation.

Finally, tradition as a source of moral and cultural grounding in Maatian ethics speaks to the obligatory need to remember the past. The past is here a context in which moral authority and social certainty evolves. To lose memory of this is to be ignorant of moral understanding and neglectful of moral obligation. In this context, King Amenemhat tells his son that "If one fights in the arena forgetful of the past, success will elude him who ignores what one should know" (I,10). What one should know is, above all, the demands of Maat and the model it provides for a full and meaningful life.

In the narrative, the Dialog with the Ba, the man, dispirited by the unravelling of the social and moral order, asks "To whom can I speak today?" For in such a situation, "one does not remember yesterday (and thus) one does not act for one who has acted" (115-116). What the Maatian order of the past offered, the text suggests, was a moral system which had at its core the value and practice of reciprocity. Not only has this value been neglected in this situation, but as the narrative reveals, isfetic behavior rules the day. In fact, there has been a kind of "flight from authority," to use Stout's (1981) phrase, and the lawful or expected regularity associated with the Maatian order no longer obtains. Thus, the anonymous author declares in despair, "To whom shall I speak today?" none are righteous (*M3'tyw*) and the land is left to evildoers (*isftyw*) (Dialog, 122-123).

The point here is that Maatian ethics poses itself in a tradition in which one can meaningfully and fruitfully situate oneself. It is, of course, open to change, but the change will, of necessity, always be one of expansion in continuity rather than in rupture. Maat, then, is an ethics which gives epistemic privilege to the authority of the way of the ancestors. In doing so, it self-defines as the way of life, in a word, as the indispensable practice for maximum human flourishing.

7.3 Moral and Social Worthiness: Quest and Claim

7.3.1 Standing Well

In Maatian moral discourse central attention is given to the concept of social and moral worthiness. This discourse emerges as early as the beginning of the Old Kingdom and focuses on being worthy before God, king and people and by extension, nature as I will argue below. In the moral texts, especially in the Declarations of Virtue, three major forms of moral claims to worthiness are evident. They are: 1) standing well with God, king and people; 2) being worthy of honor before God, king and people; and 3) being beloved of God, king and people. The first concept is used to explain why one does Maat and at the same time is a quest for social and moral worthiness. The second and third are declarations of a positive evaluation by the recipient of one's Maatian practice and resultant standing.

At the center of all efforts of Maat is this quest for worthiness. One is constantly concerned that one stands well, is worthy of honor and loved. Certainly, one does good because it is good, i.e., beneficial in this world and the other. But an indispensable measure and mirror of how well one is doing and has done is the evaluation of others. Thus, as we shall see, in Maatian ethics even love is not posed so much as a gift you give but more so as a gift and evaluation you receive that measures and mirrors your moral and social worthiness.

Standing well with God, king and people, then, is a central and constant moral concern. In their moral self-presentations both Harkhuf and Pepinakht offer an often repeated moral claim of doing good so that they might stand well with God. Each says:

> I was one who spoke good and repeated good.
> (what was loved)
> I never spoke anything evil against anyone to his superior.
> For I wished to stand well with the Great God.
> (*mr.n(.i) nfr n.i ḫr Nṯr ꜥ3*)
> (Urk. I:122.28--123.2; 132.16--133.1)

Nefer-Seshem-Ra makes a similar claim but expresses the concept of standing well in another way. He says:

> I spoke truly. I did justice (Maat).
> I spoke the good. I repeated the good.
> I held fast to the good beginning.
> For I wished my name to be good by it with the people. (Urk. I:198.15-18)

Thus, standing well can be expressed as "its being good" for one or as one's "name being good." In any case, it is a quest for moral and social worthiness by speaking and doing Maat.

Likewise, Rediu Khnum says that he did good and showed preference for the vulnerable so that his name might be good. He says:

> I gave a gift to him who requested it.
> I nourished one I did not know like one I did know so that my name might be good in the mouth of those on earth.
> (Petrie, 1898:pl.XV, 15-16)

Finally, Kagemni says of his moral quest for worthiness:

> I spoke truly. I repeated good,
> In the way which the king loves

> For I wished to stand well by it with the
> king and the Great God.
> (Urk. I:195.11-12)

Standing well with God, king and people, then, forms a central concept in the general discourse on moral and social worthiness. And it forms a parallel moral concern with "being one honored before God, king and people."

7.3.2 Being Worthy of Honor

The moral quest and claim of "being worthy of honor" also reaffirms the centrality of worthiness in Maatian practice and discourse. As early as the Fourth Dynasty, as noted above, Ikhi defines himself in his moral narrative as "*nb im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr '3*--a possessor of honor before the Great God" (Urk. I:9.11). Moreover, in the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty, the concept of honor as a moral category appears also in the tomb of the Lady Meryt (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:33). She defines herself first in terms of her relationship with the king saying she is a personal acquaintance of the king (*rḫt-nsw*). Then she states that she is a possessor of honor before her husband (*nb(t) im3ḫy(t) ḫr hi.s*). She thus grounds her moral self-definition in her role in both public and private life, a dual stress which continues throughout the autobiographies.

In addition to the standard claim that he is "worthy before the Great God," the priest *Wr-ḫww*, also declares his worthiness before his peers saying, he was "*im3ḫw ḫr ntwy ḥn'.f*--worthy before those who were with him" (Urk. I:48.8;

47.2) He also adds an interesting dimension to the expression of worthiness by saying:

> *ḥp(.i) ḥr w3t nfrt nt Imnt*
> *ḥppt im3ḫw ḥr.s*
>
> I travelled on the good road of the West
> upon which a worthy one travels. (Urk. I:48.4-5)

This concept of travelling on the way of the worthy one is a fundamental moral claim and lasts through the Late Period. Pepi-ankh-her-ib offers an inclusive range of his desire to be worthy of honor, saying:

> *ink im3ḫw ḫr nswt*
> *ink im3ḫw ḫr Nṯr '3*
> *ink im3ḫw ḫr rmṯ*
>
> I am worthy of honor before the king.
> I am worthy of honor before the Great God.
> I am worthy before the people. (Urk. I:222.3-5)

As is standard practice in the Declaration of Virtues, he goes on to say "I am beloved of my father, praised by my mother and beloved of my sisters and brothers" (Urk. I: 222. 6-7). Thus, he offers two interrelated declarations of worthiness.

Even in the Late Period this quest for worthy of honor continues. Lady Ta-Aset says she is:

> *st n sw3š sw3 ḥr mṯn sbi ḥr w3t im3ḫ(yw)*
>
> A woman worthy of being honored. One who set out on the way and travelled the way of the honored ones.

Lady Ta-Habet declares this same virtuous status and practice and repeats the Old Kingdom declaration: "I was honored by my father, praised by my mother and kind to my

brothers and sisters." This and similar declarations of virtue attest to the durability of this quest for worthiness and the constant concern of the ancient Egyptians with being honored before God, and humans as a central tenet of their ethics.

The word *im3ḫ* from which *im3ḫw*, the masculine descriptive form, and *im3ḫyt*, the feminine descriptive form come, means honor, veneration, reveredness--in a word, worthiness (Faulkner, 1981:20). This especially refers in the ancient texts to the elderly and the departed (Wb, I:81.16). However, it may and does mean especially in modern Maatian ethics moral and social worthiness in general. Thus, Kheti (Edel, 1984:96ff) says that he has "done what people love and the divinities praise," to wit: he gave sustenance and support to the hungry, thirsty, naked, the widow and the orphan, and rejected the "lover of lies." And also, he concludes:

> I answered evil with good and did not search
> out evil so that I might endure on earth.
> And reach a state of worthiness.

Likewise, Ibi says "*Ink ir M3ʿt sb n im3ḫ*--I am one who did Maat and attained worthiness" (Clère and Vandier, 1982:3.7).

There is in this concept of worthiness two major dimensions as stated above: the social and the moral. However, they are never separated, for moral status is always achieved in a definite social context and among a particular people. Thus, one is worthy in society before God, king and

the people and within the people, worthy in one's family. And as we have seen, to do the will of God, Maat, is to act for others in the context of society without distinction. Thus, Sen-ndjesui says:

> I spoke what the great love and the small praise so as to raise Maat to the great God lord of heaven. (Petrie, 1898:pl.ix)

The social and moral, then, are intimately linked and one is compelled to justify oneself in this life and the next by how s/he has related to others. It is in this regard that one seeks the positive evaluation of being loved.

7.3.3 Being Loved

The concept of love (*mrwt, merut*) in Maatian ethics is essentially a concept of moral and social worthiness. It is a reward, measure and mirror of one's worthiness. As the priest of Amun, Hor says:

> The virtuous person is rewarded for his virtue.
> And there is love for one who is blameless.
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985:510.6)

The reward is both divine and social. The divine reward is love of God and immortality in the other world. For God loves and rewards the Maatian person with eternal life. The social reward is love, praise and immortal memory from the people.

In this context one is not so much urged to love others as to be worthy of their love. Thus, one strives to gain others' love by good deeds and one's valuableness to one's family, city, district, country and king. Even outside the

land of Egypt, Sinuhe speaks of winning over the leader of Retenu through his valuableness (Blackman, 1972:1-41). He says, "I was valuable in his heart and he loved me. He recognized my valor" (Sinuhe, B105). Moreover, he praised King Sesostris I as one who won the people's love through his pleasantness and kindness. Thus, he says of Sesostris I:

> He is a possessor of kindness
> Great in pleasantness
> He conquers through love
> His city loves him more than itself
> It acclaims him more than its own divinity.
> (Sinuhe, B65-67)

Again, the virtue is not so much in loving, but in making oneself loved because of one's virtues and deeds--in a word, one's Maat.

This emphasis is reaffirmed in the teachings of Kheti for Merikara. He says, "Make yourself loved by the whole land. A good character is remembered (when a person) has passed" (Merikara, 141). This link of good character and the quest for love demonstrates clearly the moral character of the quest for love. Moreover, Kheti instructs his son to "make your monument last through love of you" (37). Here an explicit moral call is made to make oneself loved through good character and the good deeds that flow from this. For he makes the latter statement in the context of an instruction to "not be evil for kindness is good." Also, the instruction to make oneself loved is given as a conclusion to an injunction against killing and a wish of the king that

his son may meet him in the Otherworld without any one to accuse him.

It is in light of these and similar passages and textual emphases that Assmann (1989a:64) has noted that "The Egyptian did not have to love but to make himself loved." Although the latter half of the statement is true, the first half is less so. For the act of loving is implicit in the care and responsibility given to people, the exchanges between family members and the mutual embracing of friends. Moreover, although the focus in Maatian ethical discourse is on being loved or making oneself loved through one's worthiness, as noted above, moral claims of loving others do exist in the texts. Thus, the priest and governor, Montemhet says in his moral presentation:

> Let me make you aware of my good deeds . . .
> I gave my benefits to upper Egypt and my love to lower Egypt. (Wreszinski, 1916:16; Leclant, 1961: 64.4-5)

He goes on to say that "the citizens (of these two regions) longed to see me like Ra when he shows himself. So great was my beneficence, so grand was my excellence." In this example one sees a reciprocity of loving action. Montemhet first shows moral regard for the people, giving them benefits and love. They, in turn long to see him like Ra because of his beneficence. In a word, he becomes beloved by his good deeds which are, by his own words, acts of love for the people.

One sees here that love is an inherent sentiment in the practice of care and responsibility toward the people. But what is central here is that love is expressed as active moral regard, not as a claim of generalized affection. Montemhet clearly links love and good deeds. And it is the recognition of his value by the people that gives him the moral approval he seeks. For their looking forward to see him was because of his beneficence and excellence in serving them. Thus one sees that love as a Maatian practice can involve both giving and receiving.

Moreover, love as an implicit moral regard and motivation is also attested to in the narrative, the Dialog With the Ba. For one of the key moral and social concerns of the protagonist in the narrative is the absence of love in social relations. Therefore, he asks:

> To whom shall I speak today?
> Brothers are mean
> And friends of today do not love.

This concern with the prevalence of meanness and the absence of love clearly identifies love as a necessary moral commitment. But again, its most definitive focus in the literature is as a moral concern for worthiness. And it is this quest for worthiness which is affirmed and reaffirmed by love and honor before God and others that forms a central motivation in Maatian ethics.

The importance of merut as a moral category in Maatian ethics emerges in the Old Kingdom, as noted above, as a

moral claim to worthiness. One was affirmed in his moral and social status by being beloved of God, king, people in general and family members in particular. Thus love expresses itself as a category of evaluation in both small and large spheres from the intimacy of the family to the generalized context of all people (Assmann, 1989a:64). And it is through the principle and practice of Maat that love is cultivated and won. For it is by walking in the way of Maat that both love (*mrwt*) and life (ankh) are both possible and assured.

The moral and social concern for love evolves both in the family and society at the same time. As shown above, in one of the earliest autobiography's which uses the category Maat, the priest *Wr-ḫww* posits, as part of his moral self-presentation, the claim that he was "an honored one," one beloved of his father, beloved of his mother . . .kind to his sisters and brothers and beloved of his servants,one who never did what was harmful to anyone" (Urk. I:47.1,3,4). Tep-m-ankh, a royal treasurer of the 4th Dynasty, introduces himself as "*smr w' n mrwt*--unique friend of love" (Urk. I: 33.17). Thus, he qualifies his unique friendship with the king by the commitment of love. This is both an agent commitment and a claim of positive recipient evaluation, to use Outka's two categories for love (1972:10). And Ibi defines himself as "beloved of his father, praised by his

mother, worthy before the king, worthy before the divinity of his city, and well-beloved" (Urk. I:143.4-8).

The royal architect, Nekhebu, expresses the value of being loved and at the same time joins this with the value of social and moral praise. Thus, he says: "I am beloved of my father, a favorite of my mother . . .and praised by my brothers and sisters" (Urk. I:216.6,8). Moreover, after he has enumerated his many good deeds for the people, he states, "I am one beloved of the people" (Urk. I:217.10). Pepinakht repeats this moral claim saying:

ink mry n it.f
ḥsy n mwt.f
mrrw n snw.f

I am one beloved of his father
praised of his mother
One whom his brothers and sisters love.

As indicated above, the spheres of quest for love as moral worthiness extend from family to all people. This often includes the evaluation of one's city and district. Thus, the nomarch Henku says of his moral and social status in his district: "I am one honored one beloved of fathers praised by mothers. The use of fathers and mothers in the plural points to an extended honor beyond his own mother and father to those in the district. Returning to his own family, he says: "I am one beloved of his father, praised of his mother excellent of character with his brothers, kind to his sisters."

Furthermore, in the First Intermediate Period, Ipi joins both the concern for love and honor in his quest and claim of moral worthiness. Thus he says:

ink ir ḳd.f mry rmṯ
ḥsy n it.f mry snw
ink ḏd(.i) nfrtt mr mrrt
im3ḫw šps nsw ipi
nn sp ḏd(.i) msḏḏt rmṯ nb
rdi.n(.i) t n ḥkr ḥbs n ḥ3y

I am one who made his character, one beloved
of the people,
Praised by his father, beloved of his brothers
and sisters
I am one who speaks good things and loves
what is worthy of being loved
An honored one, a noble of the king (king's
gentleman) Ipi
Never have I spoken what anyone hates
I gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the
naked. (Hordjash and Berlev, 1982:61)

Ipi's statement that he "loved what was worthy of being loved" is an important one. It is contrasted with his assertion that he has "never spoken anything anyone hates." Certainly, it is reflective of the Maatian equation since the Old Kingdom of "what is loved" with "what is good" and "what is hated" with "what is bad." God and the righteous love the good (Maat) and hate the bad (isfet). But the statement also reaffirms how to obtain the love which affirms worthiness and clearly, it is to do good. Here, it is to speak what is loved and to aid the vulnerable. Thus, one earns the honor of being beloved of the people and one's family.

In the Middle Kingdom, Rediu Khnum says in his moral self-presentation that he is "a person of character who is

loved in the mouth of the people" (Petrie, 1898:p.xv,6). He concludes his autobiography saying, "I am one who made his character, one beloved of the people in the course of every day." And Intef, joining location with the value of love, says "I came from my city, I descended from my district, having done what people love and the divinities praise." And finally, Kay lists as one of his moral claims that he is "one whom this land holds in affection," thus extending his quest and claim of moral worthiness to everyone (Anthes, 1928:Gr.24,3). All these moral claims use the category of love as a recipient evaluation and again reaffirm the importance of love as a reward, measure and mirror of one's worthiness.

In the New Kingdom, the focus on love from others as a reward and an essential mirror and measure of moral worthiness continues. In this regard, the architect Pahekamen says in his moral self-presentation that he has come to the city of eternity "having served the king without failure, blame or fault." Thus, he concludes, "My lord praised and loved me for my excellence (*mnḫ.i*) (Urk. IV:1470). This *mnḫ* indicates various kinds of excellence, including moral excellence for which it translates as virtue. Also, the Sebait of Amenomope stresses the importance of love and praise in the context of advice on showing care and responsibility for the poor. Amenomope defines such Maatian practice as a "path of life" and says, "Better is praise with

the love of people than wealth in the storehouse" (XVI,5-12).

In the Late Period, the priest of Amun Hor reaffirms the concept of love as a reward, and a mirror and measure of one's worthiness. He says:

> I have created love of me on earth
> And I have increased my praises in my city
> For I knew I would find them later.

The concept of finding good later refers to the central moral concept of reciprocity. And it recalls the Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi which says, "Do a good deed and throw it in the water; when it dries you will find it" (AEL III:174. 19,10). Thus, in Maatian ethics no good done is ever lost, for in the end it will benefit you and others.

Also, in the Late Period, the priest Montemhet prays that Amen Ra will cause others to love and remember him. He says:

> May (Amen) put love of me in the hearts of the people so that everyone may love me
> - - - - - - -
> May he make my name last like the starts in heaven
> - - - - - - -
> May my ka be remembered in his temple night and day
> - - - - - - -
> And may my name not be forgotten in the years that come forever after. (Leclant, 1961:33.7-34.34)

Here both the love of the people and their remembrance of him are sought. For these two are central factors in the concept of immortality.

In summary, then, merut in Maatian ethical literature is predominantly a concept of moral worthiness. As such it

is a mirror and measure of one's worthiness as well as a reward for that worthiness. The focus then is on being loved by others because of one's worthiness through good deeds and excellent character, i.e., one's virtue in practice. Therefore, the essential point of departure is not what one feels about oneself but what others feel about you. The essential moral directive, then, is not "love your neighbor" but "do Maat for her so that she may love you and affirm your moral and social worthiness before God and people." Nor is it "love your neighbor as yourself," for other-regard is prior to and the basis of self-regard.

This is the meaning of the seal bearer, Sehetep-ib-Ra's moral self-definition as "the real image of love--*twt m3ʿ n mrwt*." For he says this after a long list of virtues in relationship and exchange. He is, he says:

> A man of Maat before the Two Lands
> A truthful witness like Djehuti
> - - - - - - -
> excellent in counsel,
> speaking that which is good
> Repeating that which is loved
> Good at listening, excellent in speaking, a
> prince who unravels the knot,one who his lord
> exalts before millions. The real image of love.
> (Les. 69:17-22)

It is, then, in the process of doing good deeds and interacting with others that self-regard is developed in other-regard.

Thus, the "self" in "self-regard" is a social self, constituted in the process of encounter and exchange. Moral development of a person then becomes a reciprocal process of

giving and receiving, of doing good and being worthy of love, praise, honor and ultimately immortality, because of it. It is this understanding that leads Nedjem-ib, an ordinary person, to define himself saying: "I was one beloved of the people. . . .I was a doer of that which all the people praised" (Urk. I:75.13,16). Again, then, the process of seeking the love of others by Maat-doing grounds, reaffirms and rewards a person. Having won the love of others and the correlative honor, a person is then able to claim worthiness before God and others and to anticipate immortality in the social and spiritual realm.

Nowhere is this understanding of the centrality of love as a reflection of moral and social worthiness clearer than in the autobiography of the count and supervisor of the priests, Mentuhotep of the 11th Dynasty (Goedicke, 1962; Schenkel, 1964). The word love appears in this document six times which is more often than any other autobiography with which I am familiar. This demonstrates its importance to both the author and the text itself as a moral self-presentation, i.e., a declaration of virtue. All the references to love are made as a claim of recipient evaluation of the agent. It thus reaffirms the Maatian ethical emphasis on making oneself worthy of love by moral and social excellence (*ikr, mnh*).

Mentuhotep's first reference to love appears in the statement: "I was persistent and loyal, one to whom his lord

gave his love" (2). He follows this with a listing of virtues, i.e., "patient, free from negligence and not disrespectful . . ." which affirm his worthiness. Secondly, he says "love of me was in the body of the courtiers, the great ones of the palace and the one enthroned there (i.e., the king)" (3). This is a reaffirmation of his worthiness by referring not only to the king's love again, but also the great ones of the palace. Thirdly, Mentuhotep widens the circle of evaluation by declaring that "the learned and the unlearned loved me; everybody thanked God for me and prayed that I endure on earth" (5). At this point, Mentuhotep lists other virtues: having raised the young and buried the old and poor, and having given clothes and food to the needy.

The list of virtues continues with his saying "I nourished the children (of the district) with (my) deeds, and anointed the widows. There was no citizen miserable in my time" (9-10). He explains these good deeds by making his fourth reference to love, saying:

> I strove to create love of me so that my
> name might be good
> And that I might be vindicated in the afterlife.
> (10-11)

Here is a clear statement of love as a mirror and measure of moral and social worthiness and as evidence of worthiness for eternal life. It is for this reason as, he says, that one strives to cause others to love one.

His fifth reference to love is made in the context of his saying he is: "One who is calm in speech, one who is patient and one who does not quarrel with the ordinary person." For he says: "there is no arrogant person in authority who is loved." This, of course, speaks to the virtues of humbleness and gentleness which makes one worthy of love. As Ptahhotep states, "as ill-will comes from opposition, good will increases love" (397-398). Moreover, Phebhor says: "Pride and arrogance are the ruin of their owner . . . . But he who is gentle by virtue of his good character creates his own fate" (AEL III:189.4,22; 5,1).

Mentuhotep's sixth and final reference to love is in the context of defining himself as a helper of those in need. He asserts that he is: "one who hears his case (the needy) and removes his suffering . . .one who bows to every-one and one who does not hide his face from the hungry. For the helping hand is the one which is loved" (12-13). He concludes his autobiography with a homage to good character as a monument and better than a thousand gifts. He then says, "May it happen as it said." To wit, "may my name be good and enduring in my city and my monument never pass away" (16). And, of course, this monument is good character (*bit nfr*) and the memory and love of it which promise immortality.

7.4 The DOI: Rules Without Commandments

As noted above in chapter IV, the Declarations of Innocence in chapter 125 of the Book of Coming Forth By Day serve as an ideal set of moral norms for ancient Egyptian society (Budge, 1898 I; Faulkner, 1985; Rossiter, 1979; Allen, 1974). As such, they are key to understanding Maatian morality. Piankoff (1930:82) has observed that "the most important document for the study of Egyptian morality is without a doubt chapter 125 of Coming Forth. Although this overstates the case on one level, the centrality of the DOI cannot be denied. For they contain not only a summary of major moral concepts, but also are set within the context of judgment and the quest for immortality.

As discussed in chapter IV, the quest for immortality is a central concept and practice in Maatian ethics. It presupposes and poses a judgment after death in which deeds are weighed in the balance and one is assigned immortality or extinction based on the judgment of one's worthiness. The process of judgment has as its centerpiece and corner-stone the Declarations of Innocence, thirty-six and forty-two disavowals of things isfetic and thus in contradiction to Maat, the will and wish of God. These declarations of freedom from isfet represent an ideal set of norms which serve as a fundamental referent in understanding and practicing Maat. They are clear expressions of Maatian behavior and are reaffirmed as such by the prefatory and

following claim of the vindicating one that he has brought Maat and done Maat.

These Declarations of Innocence and the Declarations of Virtue from which they originate represent a fundamental and compelling set of moral norms. And although there are no direct divine commands in terms of specific rules from God in Maatian ethics, these declarations suggest an implicit command of observance. Commands of God are usually associated with rulership in Kemetic literature and most often refer to a king's socio-political conception of what s/he is obligated to do. This does not mean that there is no ethical content to these conceptions. On the contrary, this conception of command is often associated with establishing Maat and driving out isfet. Thus, in Seti I's hymn to Ra, he says:

> As to him who acts by the command of his God
> No palm's width of his action will fail
> You are my father who inspires my heart
> What I did accorded with your command.
> (Lichtheim, 1992:76)

And, Thutmose III states that he "did not forget anything that he (Amen) had commanded him to do" and that "he did it for him in accordance with his command (Urk. IV:730). Moreover, he describes his first victorious campaign as a result of the command of Amun who "led him on excellent ways" (Urk. IV:780.8-9). And Ramesses III says to Amun: "I have not transgressed what you have commanded, what I have been directed to do" (pHarris I,3,10). And still in the

Late Period, Piankhi says, "There is nothing which I do without his knowing it; it is he who commands me to do it--*n irt.i m ḫm.f ntf wḏ n.i irt*" (Urk. III:22,69). When Ramesses III says he has not transgressed what was commanded, he sheds light on the declaration of innocence which simply says, "I have not transgressed--*n thi*" (B12). This declaration of not having transgressed suggests and requires rules one can observe or transgress. But the rules may be general or specific, and in Kemetic texts they are most often general.

In Kemetic literature there is a suggestion that Maatian ethics makes a distinction between command (*wḏ*) and counsel (*sḫr*). In a text concerning the founding of a temple by Sesostris I, it says:

> *wḏ mdwt ẖft sḏm st*
> *nḏ-r3 m swnt ḥrw.sn* (El Adly, 1984:7.10-11)
>
> Command was given for them to hear
> Counsel was given for them to learn.

The word use here for counsel is *nḏ-r3* but *sḫr* is the most often used. Moreover, the phrase *wn ḥr* means literally to "open the sight of" and is rendered here following Lichtheim (AEL I:116) as "learn," given its causative form *swnt*. Thus, it means so that they might have clear or good vision. It can and does mean in the modern Maatian sense cause to have a clear moral vision. This, of course, is the fundamental purpose of the Sebait, Instructions, which give moral vision

and moral grounding. And the Instructions are essentially offered as moral counsel rather than command.

Unlike the Catholic division between commands which bind and counsels which suggest, in Maatian ethics both command and counsel are morally compelling (Glazer, 1970). Thus, fulfillment of each is an <u>opus debitum</u> rather than a command being an <u>opus debitum</u> and counsel being a work of superogation. Counsel, then, is morally compelling. Its preference over command in Maatian ethics points to the open texture of the Maatian project, its ostensible assumption about human preference for the good, i.e., as the texts say, their love of Maat and hatred of evil. Maat is both good and the will and wish of God. It is thus a general point of orientation, an ideal theme which functions as a framework for right-doing and wrong-avoidance. Therefore, it is more often posed as a general good done than a specific rule observed.

It is in light of this that the Declarations of Innocence have an added significance. For they offer a specific set of rules which carry an implication of the wish and will of God. This is grounded in three basic facts. First, these declarations, as shown above in the chapters II, III and IV, evolve from the DOV which describe doing good deeds and the rejection of evil as Maat. And Maat is by definition what God loves, wills and wishes. Secondly, these declarations take place in a context of judgment in

which one is compelled to disavow several species of wrongdoing before the Divine. These obligatory disavowals of wrongdoing before the Divine clearly suggest that they are moral norms required by God. And finally, in summing up one's case of worthiness for immortality during judgment, one clearly states that she has done Maat and done away with evil. And in doing these things, she concludes, she has "satisfied God with what he loves, wishes and wills."

Again, the verb "*mr*" contains the sense of love, will and wish. Neither one of these meanings indicate command. But *mr* in its meaning as will suggests a compelling character to these norms. Still, it is important, in the context of Maatian ethics, to recognize its open texture and its assumption about human agency. For again, inherent in this absence of direct moral commands to the people as distinct from socio-ethico-political commands to the royal ruler, is a respect for human agency rooted in an assumption of humans' capacity for rational knowledge and ethical sensitivity as expressed and made possible by the *ib*, i.e., the heart/mind.

Moreover, the absence of commands similar to the Judeo-Christian and Islamic tradition points unavoidably to an anthropology which assumes the humans' ability to arrive at moral norms within the general framework of the demands of Maat. This, in turn, evolves from the correlative assumption in Maatian anthropology that this capacity for moral

discernment and resultant practice is both God-given and the product of patient thought and practice. Thus, the prophet of Amun Hor (22nd Dynasty), says after enumerating his good deeds:

> *di s Nṯr m ib.i r sḳ3 ʿḥʿw(.i)*
> *ḥr tp t3*
>
> God placed it in my heart so that my
> lifetime might be prolonged on earth.
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:511.K7-8)

And the prophet of Amun, Harsiese (22nd Dynasty) says:

> But now behold, my father was already under
> the instruction of his God himself and
> thereby
> He placed him on the road of his praised ones.
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:464.8)

And finally, Djedkhonsefankh, in the Late Period says, "Khnum fashioned me as one serviceable (literally beneficial of heart). He made my character superior to others. He steered my tongue to excellence" (Janssen, 1955:127.3-4).

Here we have three expressions of Kemetic understanding of the God-given capacity for moral excellence. Hor's understanding is that God placed moral understanding in his heart and Djedkhonsefankh posits the divine shaping of his whole personality. For Djedkhonsefankh, the Divine fashions his heart/mind to be beneficial to others, gives him a superior character and guides his speech to excellence. Thus, his heart/mind (*ib*), character (*bi3t*), and tongue (*ns*) bear witness to God's shaping spirit. Moreover, Hariese posits a case of his father's being "under the instruction of God himself," revealing perhaps his priestly position and

the assumption of an ongoing and close relationship with God. The priest Montuhotep in the Late Period says a similar thing asserting that people say of him because of his excellent actions that "he is one whom God has taught" (Otto, 1954:160). But again, even here there are no commands. Rather there is a God-given capacity, a divine shaping and ongoing divine instruction which informs and grounds the moral project.

In addition to God's gift of the capacity for moral understanding and moral grounding, there is in Maatian texts also the stress on self-development in this context. Therefore, since God does not give foreknowledge except in rare cases, the challenge is for humans to struggle patiently and consistently to learn and practice the moral, i.e., Maat. It is in this context that Khun-Anup tells Rensi, the high steward, "Be patient that you may learn Maat." For he says, "no one hasty attains excellence." Finally, he says, "Let your eyes see and your heart/mind be informed" (B, 209-210, 211-212, 213). The call for patience (*w3ḥ-ib*) is a call for spiritual and mental discipline necessary to learn Maat. It is a discipline whereby a sense of right and wrong are transformed into moral qualities and eventually into a moral character which allows one to assume and claim that it was the Divine which shaped it.

Letting one's eyes see is a metaphor for experiencing life and is thus linked to informing one's mind and heart.

For what is observed and experienced must be translated into moral sensitivities and moral knowledge. It is in this context that Intef (Urk. IV:971.11) says, "*pẖr.i m-s3 m3ʿt*--I sought after Maat" and that his heart/mind was the fundamental means by which he learned Maat and by which he was guided into doing it. Thus, he says of his Maat-doing:

> It was my heart that caused me to do this as
>   it guided me
> It was for me an excellent instructor
> - - - - - - - -
> I flourished greatly because of it
> I excelled through what it caused me to do
> And I became worthy (*iḳr*) by its guidance.
>   (Urk. IV:974)

He concludes saying, "*nṯr pw iw.f m ẖt nbt*" which can mean either "it is a god in every body" or "it is God which is in everybody." In both cases, it represents the presence of the divine in humans and the ground and guide of moral development.

This divine element of heart/mind in the human person includes both affective and cognitive capacity, conscience and consciousness, in a word, the capacity for moral sensitivity and moral knowledge. Thus, the heart/mind not only reflects on human realities, but feels concerning these realities, eliciting and expressing emotions of desire, shame, restraint, love of the good and hatred of the evil. The *ib* thus creates moral meaning for its owner from its own internal capacity and its evaluation and embrace of social norms. For the seeking after Maat (*pẖr m-s3 m3ʿt*) is a constant seeking of balance between what the heart/mind

feels and thinks and what the social norms of any given social context and time are. In this context, the general character of the Maatian demand allows for variations of both interpretation and practice.

Certainly, Bilolo's (1988:7) definition of Maat in philosophical terms speaks to the philosophical and practical quest inherent in the Maatian project of searching after Maat. For it is to him, first of all, an intellectual commitment to knowledge, a moral and intellectual commitment to truth, justice and uprightness and an emotional and intellectual commitment to the ideal of love and the process of becoming. Thus his conception of Maat is one of an ongoing quest for moral, scientific and philosophical knowledge, out of love knowledge and the aspiration toward it in an ongoing practical process of human development, indeed human flourishing. And again, it is this ongoing process which the ancient Egyptian called searching after Maat (truth, justice, rightness) and which offers an inherent challenge of transcendence.

Here it is important to note that there is nothing in Maatian ethics historically which justifies going beyond socially-sanctioned norms. Thus, one tends to raise the question of the possibility of self-transcendence of the social system and creative social innovation. The reality is, as argued above, that unlike religions which deny ultimacy to any given form of state or pattern of social

relations, the ancient Egyptians saw their system as divine-established and maintained. Thus, transcendence of it or the concept of "the individual over and against society" was neither conceived nor a conceptual possibility. Modern Maatian ethics, of necessity, poses a transcendent dimension within its moral project. For it evolves in the midst of an oppressed community and its central project of freedom is directed both against existing relations and toward redefining human possibilities and the groups for maximum human flourishing.

However, the modern Maatian project does not embrace the individualistic approach to contestation with society. In fact, its communitarian character and thrust challenge individualistic assumptions of the dominant society. The Maatian project is grounded in an ontology of possibility, outlined in chapter V, which points toward human uniqueness and inherent potentiality. The moral cultivation of oneself, then, is defined by four basic factors: a) it is always in community; b) it is open-textured; c) it is ongoing; and d) it is grounded in inherent qualities and capacities that evolve in relations and in constantly "seeking after Maat--*pḫr m-s3 m3ʿt*."

In the midst of this ongoing process, one at various points is able to say, "I know the good or evil of an act or thing." For both the divine gift of heart/mind and ongoing experience constantly inform moral consciousness and

conscience. Thus, Userhat (KRI 361.5-8) addresses the divinities as those "who hate lies and wrongdoing and live by rightness" and says he has not done isfetic things. He concludes saying, "I know what my God hates and I act on the water of his precept--*iw.i rḫ.kwi bwt nṯr.i iri ḥr mw.n wḏ.f.*" To act on the water of God is to be loyal and attentive and obedient to his precepts, in a word, to do Maat as is his love, will and wish. Likewise, the treasurer, Iret Hor-aa, says, "I was found as one deaf to the rich, but as (one) friendly to the have-nots and as one who helped the weak against the strong. For I know that God is satisfied with one who acts thus" (Otto, 1954:162).

Djedkhonsefankh concludes his autobiography saying, "I know God acts for the right minded," i.e., the Maat-minded (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:436.11-1). And finally, Sishu, father of Petosiris says, "I did Maat and hated isfet, for I know He lives by it and is pleased by it" (Lefebvre, 1923 II:83.5). It is this declaration of knowing Maat and that God loves, wills, wishes and rewards it, that reaffirms the cultivation of Maat conscience and consciousness in experience. And it also reaffirms the presence of general norms which provided a framework for the project.

In addition to the emphasis on Maat-doing evolving from its being seen as what God wills, it also emanates from the ancient Egyptian appreciation for the concrete and practical. Breasted (1934:27) exaggerates when he states that

"the Egyptian . . .always thought in concrete terms and in graphic forms." But he is correct to state the tendency of the Egyptians to think most often in concrete terms, noting that the ancient Egyptian "thought not of theft but of a thief, not of love but a lover, not of poverty but of a poor man: he saw not social corruption but a corrupt society." What is true here is that ancient Egyptians did indeed think in concrete terms--not because they did not have abstract principles or could not think abstractly as some scholars have argued, but because they had a cultural preference for the concrete and practical, just as there is a cultural preference among many if not most European intellectuals for the abstract. Maat is an abstract concept, but ultimately, it must have concrete meaning in practice, i.e., have a "lived concreteness". Practice, then, is stressed here over contemplation and the concrete over the abstract.

Morenz (1984:113) states that "Maat is both the task which man sets himself and also as righteousness the promise and reward which awaits him on fulfilling it." The task, as mentioned above, is both one of cultivating the Maatian person and of creating the just and good society. This concern for the good society, and for quality relationships within it, is central to understanding both the moral concerns found in the Declarations of Innocence as well as in the moral ideal of ancient Egypt in general. For Maatian ethics and the thought and practice which is both rooted in and

reflective of it is essentially <u>communitarian</u>. This means there is a continuing concern for right relations and obligations and the rightful expectations these relationships require and fulfill. These relationships based on Maat, are reciprocal relationships between God, humans and nature. And it is these relationships which reflect roles, identity, purpose and aspiration and define duty and obligation.

In conclusion, then, Maatian ethics poses an alternative to religious ethics based exclusively or predominantly on theology and faith or ancient law. For Maatian ethics respects the Divine but does not engage in theological disputes and has no all-embracing laws which leave little or less room for creative thought about new and ongoing challenges to the African and human community. Maatian ethics emphasizes moral behavior and character development over claims of theology, faith, commandments and laws, and it stresses an anthropology of unlimited human possibility. But the hinge on which Maatian and, indeed, all African ethics turn is the quality of human relations and human practice in the context of the Divine, human and the natural order. And it is in these areas that one searched after Maat and thus, flourishes in community.

Having provided this philosophical framework for understanding Maatian social practice, we turn now to a critical discussion of the specific moral practice offered as an ideal in the Declarations of Innocence. To accomplish this,

I will divide these Declarations into three broad categories of moral concern: *im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr*--worthiness before God; *im3ḫ ḫr rmṯ kywy*--worthiness before other people and *im3ḫ ḫr wnnt* --worthiness before nature. As argued above, worthiness is the goal of moral self- and social cultivation. This is expressed in the desire "to stand well with God, king and the people," "to be beloved by family, town, king and God" and "to be honored before God, king, city, district and family." The moral category *im3ḫ* can be translated as honor, reveredness or worthiness. I choose worthiness as a more inclusive and instructive category, as argued above.

7.5 *Im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr*--Worthiness Before God

7.5.1 Worship: Reverence, Ritual and Virtue

The Declarations of Innocence (A) which deal with worthiness before God include affirmations of having:

not done what the divinities hate (9);

not reduced temple offerings to the temple (17);

not destroyed loves of the divinities (18);

not removed the offerings of the blessed ones (19);

not added to or reduced the funeral offerings (22);

not trapped birds in the sacred marshes (29);

not neglected days of select meat offerings (34);

not driven away cattle from the property of God (35);

and not blocked (the image of) God in his procession.

And the Declarations of Innocence (B) include affirmations of having:

not reduced the requirement of the temple (6);

not stolen the property of God (8);

not killed sacred cattle (13);

not reviled the king (35);

not blasphemed God (38);

and not reviled the divinity of my city (42).

As can be seen, the Declarations of Innocence which seek worthiness before God are explicitly directed toward due respect for God, sacred property and ritual. However, implicitly every declaration is reaffirmation of what God wants, wills and loves. For what God wants, wills and loves is Máat and each declaration is a call to Maat-doing. In more explicit references to God, there are prohibitions against blasphemy against God and against his representative on earth, the king or queen. This prohibition against cursing the royal ruler is due to the divine conception of kingship and of the Kemetic social order which was seen, not simply as a social order, but also as an extension and reflection of the Divine, as Frankfort (1948b) has argued. Given this, kingship was also sacred or divine, and acts against it were grave religious and ethical offenses. Thus the declaration "I have not blasphemed against God" is paralleled with the one which says "I have not cursed the king" and are clearly interrelated.

The Kemetic understanding of one's duty to God evolves from both their conception of God and their conception of

humans relationship with Him. Bleeker (1967:127) has noted that " . . .in sharp contradistinction to the Semitic way of religious thought, (the ancient Egyptian) sees no chasm between the (G)od and man but sees them as affiliated." He goes on to say that "this is no way implies that he deifies man." For "he is aware of the distance between the (G)od-head and the mortal." This is essentially a correct reading and is attested to in the text. What one discovers is a sense of shared love and mutuality between God and humans

This loving care of God and the loving service of humans is found throughout Maatian texts. The priest, Nakht-ef-mut, says of Amen Ra in a prayer:

> You are our father who provides for us
> A mother of children who raises them well
> A reliable protector for those who rely
>   on him
> A helper for those who serve him
> The guardian spirit who creates our
>   sustenances
> A friend of pleasant association
> A protector in the course of a lifetime
> One who remembers those who have passed
>   as a son
> Who grants old age joined with health,
>   power together with contentment.
>   (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985:444.5-6)

Here God is posed as both a father who provides and a mother who raises her children well. He is also guardian, helper and protection. Indicating the intimacy felt in his relationship with Amen Ra, Nakht-ef-mut describes Ra as "a friend of pleasant association." Also, Nakht-ef-mut describes God as the one who grants long life, health, power and happiness.

Drioton (1945) has also provided an important set of texts from scarabs which represent Kemetic conceptions of God and human. Among the conceptions are first, God as the giver and sustainer of life. The texts say:

> Life belongs to Amen Ra
> Amen Ra is the lord of life
> Amen Ra, the living is the lord of the
> breath of life and power.
> (Drioton, 1945:7,9)

Amen Ra is also an excellent protector: "one whom Amen protects will live; If Amen is behind me, I fear nothing; Amen Ra is the power of the one alone; Amen Ra is the refuge of the afflicted" (Drioton, 1945:9). Also, love is a central element in the relationship: "It is the love of Amen Ra which gives protection. The love of Amen Ra endures. One whom Amen Ra loves is the holy of God." And finally, God is the source of justice (Maat). The texts say: "Amen Ra is the good guide to justice. One who loves justice is the holy of God."

In addition to these texts, there are collections of prayers and sacred praises which speak of the awe in which God as Creator, nurturer, helper, protector and life giver is held (Assmann, 1975; Barucq, 1962; Hassan, 1930; Gardiner, 1905). One such prayer to Amen Ra is:

> Blessed is one who sits on the hand of Amen. He who watches over the silent, who rescues the poor, who gives the breath of life to one whom he loves and assigns a good old age in the West of Thebes. . . . O' my God, Lord of the divinities, Amen Ra, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands: Give me your hand and save me. Arise for me and cause me to live. You are Ra who rises in the

> heavens, Atum who created people. One who hears the prayers of one who calls on him, who saves a person from the hand of the violent, who brings the Nile that people may eat, the perfect guide for everyone, when he rises, people live and their hearts are lifted up when they see the one who gives breath of life to those who are in the egg, who nourishes people and birds, who provides food for mice in their holes and even worms and fleas. May he grant me a good burial after old age so that I am safe in his hands. (KRI I:387. 15-388.6)

It is important here to note that the Creator's concern and care extends to all his creation including mice, worms and fleas and his actively providing for them.

Finally, King Taharqa offers a text of Amen Ra as essentially the Creator. It describes him as:

> Lord who made what exists, Amen . . .who created people . . .and the heavens . . .(who made) water, who brought the flood in order to nourish (humankind), who created the mountains and brought the hill countries into being, who made the years . . .who made the summer in its season and the winter in its day . . . . (Macadam, 1949: pl.2)

It is in the context of such reverence and awe that the DOI prohibit blasphemy against God. This reverence and its link to Maat-doing for others can also be found in the DOV of a Ramessid priest of Amen, Bakenkhonsu (KRI 295.15--296.13). Bakenkhonsu says that Amen "favored me and distinguished me because of my good qualities. And I followed him in truth" (KRI III:296.3). He then goes on to outline first his conduct in the temple and afterwards his ethical consideration of others. Thus, he states:

I did not do isfet in his house
I did not raise my voice or command in his presence
I walked in obeisance in his domain
For I had respect for his awesome power
I did not turn my back on his servants
Indeed I was for them a father
I judged the poor like the rich and the
    strong like the weak
I gave to each man his property
For my abomination was greediness
I buried one who had no inheritance and
    made a coffin for one who had none
I protected the orphan when he appealed
    to me
I was one who provided for the needs
    of the widow
I did not drive a son from the place of
    his father
I did not snatch the young child from
    his mother
I stretched forth my hand and gave to
    those who had no food and those who
    were lacking
- - - - - - - -
I opened my ears to one who spoke truth
And I avoided one under isfet.
    (KRI III:296.5-13)

The virtues listed fit well within the traditional Maatian framework, giving aid to the vulnerable, avoiding greed and theft, remaining open to those who speak truth and avoiding those who do evil.

Likewise, the DOI pose acts against the temple, the House of God (*pr nṯr*) and its property as grave offenses. These include theft or reduction of offerings or the requirements of the temple, or unclean or violative acts in the temple. The stress here was on entering the temple as the House of God in purity and piety. Thus, the ascension into the temple and temple activity had to be free of moral wrong or ritual impurity. In a religiously-oriented society

as ancient Egypt, the temple is not simply a building but a sacred place which is the paradigm of God's creation and/or a center of his manifestation on earth (Reymond, 1969). Thus, purity, ritual and morals are indispensable requirements.

Hoffmeier (1985:213ff) has rightly noted that the temple as a sacred space could be profaned or desecrated not only "by improper intrusions into sacred space, but (also) improper conduct by a worshipper could be an offense." This led to injunctions being inscribed on doorposts and lintels of the temples directed toward priests and temple visitors from the Ramessid through the Greek periods (Otto, 1964: 67ff; Otto and Merkelbach, 1968; Greishammer, 1974). Fairman (1958), as noted above, published an inscription from a lintel of a door in the temple of Edfu which gives us an excellent example of the merger of moral and ritual observations with regard to the temple. In this text, Seshat, the mistress of writing and knowledge and the feminine counterpart to Djehuti, says to Horus:

> I have come to you . . .
> that I may set down in
> writing before you the doer
> of good and the doer of evil, to wit:
> (The doer of evil is:)
> One who initiates wrongfully
> One (who enters) when unclean
> One who speaks falsehood in your house
> One who accepts bribes
> One who covets the property of your temple
> (The doer of good is:)
> One who knows right from wrong
> One who is pure
> One who is upright and walks in righteousness

One who loves your followers exceedingly
One who is careful
One who does not take rewards or the share
of any person
I write down good for the doer of good in
your city
I reject the character of the evil doer . . .
(One who does Maat) in your house (is)
enduring forever but the wrongdoer dies
forever.

Here, I have given an order to these characterizations of the doer of good and the doer of evil, as two characterizations of the evildoer were mixed with those of the Maat-doer. Also, I have followed Fairman in this translation, making only minor changes. What one sees here is a clear marking off of sacred space and at the same time a delineation of the Maatian person. Thus, again, ethics and other religious concerns are intertwined and in the ancient Egyptian mind normally and necessarily so.

Alliot (1949) has provided numerous other examples of these temple instructions at the Edfu Temple. Another such instruction is:

O you (priest of Edfu). Do not do evil to
the servants of His house
For he loves greatly those who are in his service
Do not soil yourself with impurity
Do not commit offenses
Do not do wrong to people in the country or
the city
For they come from His eyes
And they exist for Him
His heart is greatly saddened because of the
evil he must punish
- - - - - - - -
Do not cover with your voice the voice of
another
Do not swear concerning anything
Do not sustain a lie against truth by invoking
the Lord. (Alliot, 1949:185, 186)

Again, the thrust is to join concern with ritual purity to moral purity into a worthiness before God.

Parallel to this spiritual concern for ritual is the moral and spiritual concern that ritual not become a substitute for moral practice. Thus, in the Sebait for Merikara, Kheti stresses ritual worship saying:

> Construct (fine) monuments to God
> For it makes live the name of one who does it
> A man should do what benefits his soul
> In the monthly service as a priest wear the
> white sandals
> Visit the temple
> Be discreet concerning the mysteries
> Enter the sanctuary
> Eat bread in the House of God
> Richly provide for the altars
> Increase the income, increase the
> daily offerings
> It is of value to one who does it . . .
> God is aware of who serves. (63-67)

But in a later passage, he reaffirms the emergent teaching in the First Intermediate Period that the ultimate form of worship is living a moral life. For he says:

> *siḳr nt.k nt imnt smnḫ st.k*
> *nt ẖrt Nṯr m ‘ḳ3-ib*
> *ir m3‘t rhnt ib.sm pw hr s. šsp bi3t*
> *nt ‘ḳ3-ib r iw3w n ir isft* (127-129)

> Make excellent your mansion in the West. Make firm your place in the necropolis by being upright and doing Maat. For it is what people's hearts rely on. More acceptable is the character of the upright than the ox of the wrongdoer (emphasis mine).

Moreover, he teaches in another passage that "he who is silent toward violence diminishes the offerings" (110). In both passages the ritual of sacrifice and offerings which are important forms of ancient Egyptian worship are made

subordinate to living a moral life. This privileging of character or virtue (*bi3t*) over ritual (*nt-'*) is an important aspect of Maatian ethics and finds parallels in other African religions for which sacrifice is a central form of worship.

An instructive parallel example of this privileging of the moral life over ritual can be found in the Ifa texts of the Yoruba tradition. The specific text is a moral narrative on concerns about death. It says:

> Orifusi, the father of Elu, wanted to overcome death so that death would not kill him, his wives and his children. Ifa said to him: "if you do not want death to kill you, you must sacrifice. <u>But if you do not add good character your sacrifice will be in vain</u>. (Therefore) Free the fowls in your basket. (And) do not kill anything from today on. For anyone who does not want death to kill him, let him not kill anything either (emphasis mine). (Beier, 1970:48)

This text not only parallels Maatian texts in privileging character and thus, the moral life over ritual, but it also reflects the centrality of reciprocity as a moral value.

Reciprocity is, of course, an essential theme in Maatian ethics which Kheti himself takes up in his discussion of leadership, service to God and avoidance of destructive behavior. He concludes comments on the latter by saying, "a blow is repaid by its like. To every action there is a response" (123). In both Yoruba and Kemetic culture, offering is both a central spiritual and ethical act. But the texts tend to privilege the ethical act over the physical act of sacrifice and offering even though both

acts are essential to religious practice. Thus, the Kemetic texts (and the Yoruba texts in varying degrees) group the duties of offering with moral duties and often pose moral practice as the central offering to God, i.e., Maat-offering as Maat-doing. In conclusion, then, both Maatian and Yoruba texts privilege character over ritual even though ritual is clearly a central pillar in their worship. They thus privilege living the moral life as the most essential way to stand worthy before God.

7.5.2 Service to Others as Service to God

Certainly, one of the most important lessons from the Sebait and other Maatian literature is that service to God cannot in the final analysis be separated from service to other humans. Thus, the text consistently defines serving God by doing Maat. And Maat is, in the final analysis, most definitively expressed as what one does for others. Here one must refine this assertion by saying Maat is done on earth in the midst of humans and the wider environment of nature. This is an important expansion because not only is this recognized and addressed in the DOI, but as I will argue below in the section on nature, it is implicit in the texts.

From the Old Kingdom onward standing well with God or serving God to achieve worthiness has always been a process essentially defined by serving others. Therefore, Harkhuf lists among his efforts "to stand well with the Great God"

being worthy before and loved by his family members, caring for and aiding the vulnerable, speaking fairly and what was loved, never speaking evil and never judging unjustly (Urk. I:122-123). Likewise, Heka-ib lists similar deeds that evidence his worthiness before God (Urk. I:132-133). For these authors and others knew that it is Maat which God loves, wishes and wills. Thus, Rhw-r-im3ḫw-sn says of her standing worthy, "*sḥtp Nṯr n mrrt.f*--I satisfied God with what he loves" (Urk. I:265.16). And Inti reaffirms that "Doing Maat is what God wishes, wills and loves--*mrrt Nṯr pw irt ḫt m3ʿ*" (Urk. I:71.10).

Also, in the Old Kingdom, the priest Khentika says that "he did Maat" for the lord of Maat, caring for the vulnerable, honoring his parents and judging justly. For he wanted to be worthy before God and all people (James, 1953:40). He, thus, reaffirms Maat-doing as the most effective way of serving God. An even more definitive expression of service to God as service to others is the Declaration of Virtue of the priest Horakhabit in the Late Period. He says:

> I am one upright of heart toward his God,
> free of transgression
> I raised the son(s) of my associate when
> their fathers had gone to the grave
> I did good deeds (*3ḫw*) for my companions
> I provided for the one in need
> I loved every Maatian person who turned
> his back on transgressing the way
> I was a father for the weak and one who
> did not pass over the weak concerning
> his justice
> I have done all that God loves
> And did not have two faces among the people.
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:545.5-9)

This shows again that Maat-doing for God translates, in the final analysis, as doing good for others.

In the Sebait, this interrelatedness is also reaffirmed. This is the meaning of the Late Period Sebait of Phebhor which teaches that what you wish to do for God, do it for others, especially the most vulnerable. Phebhor (pInsinger, 16) says:

> God lets one acquire wealth in return for
> doing good
> He who gives food to the poor God takes
> him to himself in mercy without
> measure (16,13)
> If you gain wealth, give a portion to God;
> by giving a portion to the poor (16,4)
> The heart of God is satisfied when the poor
> person is provided for before him. (16.3)

Thus, the teaching is that wealth is given so that one may do good and that to give to the vulnerable is in fact to give to God.

7.5.3 Offering Maat

Another way to express service to and worship of God and to achieve worthiness before God is to offer Maat. The offering of Maat is at once an ancient ritual and an ongoing ethical and spiritual project. It is a practice which grows out of the fundamental ethical and spiritual assumption that not only does God will Maat, love and want it, but that he also lives by it. Moreover, humans too, as the text show, live by Maat. Thus, Rahotep says: "*ink 'ḳ3 ḥ3ty bwt.i grg 'nḫ(.i) r' nb m irt m3't*--I am upright of heart/mind. My

hatred is of falsehood. I live each day by doing Maat" (KRI III:54.1-2).

As Hornung (1988:387) notes, then, Maat is not only nourishment for the Divine but for humans and "for all creatures an element of life (lebenselement) as indispensable as bread and water." In this context, Maat-doing came to be conceived as an offering of Maat in both the sense of a ritual of worship and an ethical practice. The ritual, of necessity, presupposed and required the ethical practice. For the ritual has no meaning or validity without the Maat-doing that is both ethical practice and spiritual nourishment.

The conception and expression of Maat-doing as offering Maat to God evolves in the First Intermediate Period. Texts from tombs at Dendera, as noted above, provide the earliest evidence of this concept. The treasurer, Meni, says of his offering Maat as an ethical practice and spiritual gift:

> I judged between two brothers in order
> to satisfy them
> I listened to the words of the needy
> I removed the cry of the needy
> I rescued the wretched from the hand
> of one stronger than he
> I spoke what the great loved and the
> small praised
> And I spoke truly so as to raise (*s'r*)
> Maat to its lord. (Urk. I:260.4-9)

Also, the sealbearer and steward, Sen-ndjesui says that he too has "spoken what the great love and the small praise, so as to raise up (*s'r*) Maat to the Great God, the lord of heaven." He also states that he is one who speaks the good

and repeats the good and one who does a thing according to its Maat" (Petrie, 1898:pl.ix). And Hetepi states that he "did not hand over a man to one more powerful than he in order to raise Maat to the Great God, Lord of heaven" (Fischer, 1968:158, fig.31b).

The royal ritual of offering Maat emerges in the Middle Kingdom and flourishes in the New Kingdom continuing through the period of Greek domination. In her valuable study on the offering of Maat, Teeter (1990:241) notes that although the presentation of Maat is attested by references as early as the Middle Kingdom, it does not occur as an iconographic device until the reign of Thutmose III." Numerous words are used to define the offering of Maat including: *s'r*--raise up; *in*--bring; *rdi (di, dit, rdi)*--give; and *ḥnk*--present or offer. As we have seen above, the verb *s'r* along with *in* were the earliest verbs used, while *ḥnk* and *rdi* became the most widely used afterwards.

The royal rituals tended to be directed toward three basic goals: 1) to give God that which he wills, wishes, loves and that by which he lives; 2) to reciprocate the life given; and 3) through these and the ethical practice that undergirds them, establish and reaffirm legitimacy of rule. As noted above, it is in the Coffin Texts in the Middle Kingdom that Maat is linked to life. It is in the conversation of Nun and the Creator in his name of Atum. In this dialog, Nun says to the Creator that he should kiss and

consume Maat and "put her to your nose that your heart may live " (CT 80). This concept of breathing Maat or of Maat being the breath of life is reaffirmed in Khun-Anup's classic statement that "doing Maat is breath to the nose" (146).

The metaphor of consuming Maat as a life-giving principle and spiritual substance is reaffirmed in subsequent texts also which says that Maat is that by which God lives. In the Temple of Seti I at Abydos the text of the ritual of offering Maat provides even more evidence of Maat's life-giving and central role. The king/priest says to Amen Ra:

> Hail to you O'Ra . . .author of all that exists, Creator of that which is. You rise with Maat, you live on Maat. You join your limbs to Maat. Behold the divinities--male and female--who are with you carrying Maat. Your left eye is Maat. Your flesh and limbs are Maat. The breath of your body and your heart is Maat. Your head is anointed with Maat. That which you eat is Maat. You drink of Maat, your bread is Maat. Your beer is Maat. The scent which you breathe is Maat. The breath of your nose is Maat. (Moret, 1988:138ff)

Thus, Maat is life to the Creator and by extension all the divinities.

Secondly, the royal ritual was done as an act of reciprocity. There is some debate on whether the act is mandatory or voluntary. Teeter (1990) sees the offering of Maat as a pious act of reciprocity, a <u>do ut des</u> exchange. Hornung (1982:203) and Finnestad (1985:155) also make this contention, but Altenmüller (1969) and Frandsen (1989:103-104) disagree, seeing it as a compulsory offering. The

weight of the evidence seems to be with Teeter, Hornung and Finnestad, for the ritual is built around the concept that the Divine is the source of life and humans are the recipients of this divine gift and should give what is given. From the Middle Kingdom on the formula for this reciprocity is "*ir.f n.f di ʿnḫ*--he (donor) acts for him (the divinity) who has given life (to the donor)" (Fischer, 1977:97). Having been given life, through Maat, the act of presenting Maat returns it to Him who gave it. But again the presentation of Maat presupposes and requires the doing of Maat. The king thus gives life through doing Maat and presenting Maat, a nourishment which causes the Divinity, the king and the people to live. And this offering, Moret (1940:4) reminds us, is "not a material offering, but rather . . .a totally spiritual offering."

Another purpose of the offering of Maat is to establish and reaffirm legitimacy of rule. This often included offering of the king's name as an equation of Maat which appears to have developed during the reign of Seti I. "This ritual stresses the legitimacy of the king and his commitment to rule in accordance with the precepts of Maat, the substance upon which the gods live" (Teeter, 1990:277). The king is, in this ritual, acting as the "corporate personality" of Egypt and the king is not simply offering his name but himself and his efforts in view of the equation of self and name (Frandsen, 1989:100-103). Moreover, Teeter (1990:237)

suggests that in using a non-specific reference of "he" or "she" in the offering statement, the sovereign's "deference to the divine presence," eliminates his or her personal identity. For in fact, "the donor is not an individual in this context, he/she is the representative of mankind who interacts with the gods."

Clearly, the royal ruler's need for justification before God is attested as early as the Pyramid Texts. As noted above, Unas "wishes to be vindicated by what he has done" (PT 316d-317a). And the texts say he "comes forth as a doer of Maat" and "he brings it, it being with him" (PT 319b). Moreover, in the Books of Vindication (CT 1105), the risen king says in justification, "I have nurtured Maat, prepared a path for me that I might receive the Wrrt crown." This offering Maat fits within a long history of royal reaffirmation of legitimacy.

It is important to note here that the offering of Maat is the central ritual and as Arnold (1962:44, no.1) suggests, seems to subsume all other ritual under it. It is also important to note that the offering of Maat was meant for public consumption given "the vast majority of scenes of the presentation of Maat or the name Maat" and their location "in public areas of the temple, in particular in places of popular supplication" (Teeter, 1990:12). This does not mean that the masses actually performed the ritual, only that they were aware of it and shared in the ritual

through the king's acting as the corporate personality of the people and his efforts to affirm the legitimacy of his rule through Maat. In fact, Teeter (1990:248) states that although images of "the goddess Maat appears in many private tombs, the representation of private individuals presenting her image is extremely rare . . . ." And except for the statue of Nespakashuty, a prophet of Maat, all the personal non-royal examples are in a mortuary text (Teeter, 1990:248-249).

But again the central act of offering Maat is an ethical one, i.e., Maat-doing on earth. And it is this kind of Maat-offering that the people, ordinary and noble, especially embraced and carried out. Thus, the priest Hor says, "I made Maat great on earth. His offering with which he (God) is satisfied--*di.i m3ʿt wrty m t3 p3t.f ḥtp.f ḥr.s*" (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:510.6-7). The offering with which God is pleased, then, is doing Maat and making it great on earth. Making Maat great on earth is spreading goodness over the land so that it is life and flourishing to humans, especially the most vulnerable. And as I argue below, this making Maat great on earth and through the land has implications for an environmental ethics also. It is this social ethical meaning of life and flourishing that is again pointed to in an assertion by the prime minister, Nakhtefmut: "I offered Maat to every divinity so that they rejoiced at what I did. I issued laws in accordance with the ancient

writings. And my speech was the breath of life" (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:553.10-11). Again, Maat-doing among the people is defined as giving to them the breath of life (*t3w n ʿnḫ*). And this is, of course, the paradigmatic conception of the prime minister's role as expressed in the Instructions to the Prime Minister (Urk. IV:1086-1093). Thus, again offering Maat to God is above all, ethical practice which satisfies Him and makes the people live and flourish.

Finally, in the Book of Coming Forth By Day, there are numerous references to Maat-doing and Maat-offering as both ethical practice and the basis for ethical judgment. One such passage as cited above is in Chapter 183 says:

> I come to you (my) hands bearing Maat, my heart with no lies in it. I put Maat for you before your face, knowing you live by it. I have done no wrongs in this land. I have not robbed a man of his possessions. I have come to you with Maat in my mouth and Maat in my hands. Maat belongs to me.

Here the departed makes a claim for entrance in Amenta. She has brought Maat. She says she speaks truth--Maat is in her mouth; and she does justice--Maat is in her hands. To say Maat belongs to her implies it is an essential element of her identity.

Certainly, the DOI, including its prefatory and concluding passages, are the locus classicus for this. Thus, one arriving in the Hall of Judgment says, "I have come before you. and I have brought you Maat" (Chapter 125). The statement "*in.n.i n.i m3ʿt*--I have brought you Maat" is a

fundamental way of saying "I offer you Maat," as noted above. And of course, immediately following this declaration is the DOI themselves which are the paradigmatic set of norms which form a fundamental focus for this study. Also, following the DOI themselves is a concluding passage which reaffirms Maat-doing and Maat-offering.

The passage says:

> Behold me, I come before you, without wrongdoing, without guilt, without evil, without a witness (against me). For there is none against who I have done anything. I live on Maat. I drink of Maat. I have done what people speak of and that which pleases the divinities. I have satisfied God with what he loves. I have given bread to the hungry clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one. I have given divine offerings to the divine ones and invocation offerings to the departed.

This passage concludes with a request for welcome in Amenta. Here we see Maat-offering as essentially an ethical practice. And although divine and invocation offerings are clearly important as a form of worship, the bulk of the Declarations of Innocence and affirmations of right-doing are rooted in the concern for and claim of moral practice which justifies and grounds one's quest for immortality. It is in this context that Teeter (1990:265) points out that the phrase "to be joined with Maat was a euphemism for death and justification."

7.5.4 Maat and Reciprocity

Certainly, one of most definitive ways of characterizing the relationship between God and humans is one of

reciprocity. Morenz (1984:96) argues that "the relationship between God and worshippers is a juridical one." By this he means that "God and men have mutual claims upon each other, that service is rendered in expectation of some other service in return." However, this relationship of mutual claim is in fact not a juridical one in the sense of the concept of divine command or law and human obedience, but of a relation of reciprocity as suggested by Morenz's own words. Thus, more appropriate than the legalism of Morenz in understand-ing the Maatian concept of the God human relation is Harrison's (1985:39) moral language of co-relation which "affirms reciprocity in action" and "firmly ground(s) the fragile possibilities of our action." For what is central here is not a God which commands and demands a juridical conception of observance of our ethical obligation. On the contrary, it is a conception of a God "whose power of co-relation enhances and enriches . . .acts aimed at human fulfillment, mutuality and justice."

Since the Old Kingdom, there is an ethical assumption that doing Maat which is God's will leads to rewards in this life and the next. Thus, Maat is the symbol and substance of "the permanent exchange that must be established, and must endure between the human community (which believes in life) and the force (the Godhead) that is its source" (Goyon, 1988:29). It is in this sense, as Goyon points out, that i.e., "transmission to humanity of control over its

earthly destiny, is intrinsically tied to the origin of Maat." For through Maat humans enter into a relationship with God of reciprocity and cooperative creation.

This moral sense of reciprocity is reflected in the Sebait, the Declarations of Virtues and the definitive treatise on Maat, the Book of Khun-Anup. In the Old Kingdom Sebait of Ptahhotep, reciprocity is addressed in both the sense of reward and retribution. As quoted above, Ptahhotep posed Maat that which lasts and leads to flourishing whereas isfet, its opposite, never brings its goods to a safe port (Ptahhotep, 84-94, 97-98). Moreover, he says that if Maat is sustained it will not only benefit one who does it, it will also cause one's children to live (Ptahhotep, 596-597). "Enduring is the person whose standard is Maat, who walks according to its ways," he says. "But the greedy (i.e., the isfetic person) will not have a grave" (Ptahhotep, 312-315).

This reciprocity appears as a law of retribution which God has established and executes and is also found in other passages of Ptahhotep. Thus, he states:

> Do not terrorize people. For God punishes accordingly. If a person says 'I will live by it,' he will lack bread for his mouth. If a person says I will be rich (by it), he will have to say my cleverness has snared me. If he says I will snare for myself he will be unable to say 'I snared for my profit.' If a person says I will rob another, he will end up giving it to one whom he does not know. (Ptahhotep, 99ff)

The admonition on retributive reciprocity reaffirms its link with the laws of Maat by saying:

> The schemes of people do not prevail. It is God's command which prevails. Think then of living in peace and what people give will come of its own accord.

The command of God (*wdt N<u>t</u>r*) is, of course, Maat. It is this command of Maat, which if one violates, leads to punishment. For as Ptahhotep notes, "one punishes the transgressor of the laws (of Maat)." These laws of Maat not only bring punishment for violation, but also reward for observation. In addition to the examples above, Ptahhotep teaches that Maat is both a ground of success and a legacy of parents to their children (105).

This dual understanding of reciprocity tied to the concept of Maat continues in the Sebait of the New Kingdom. It appears in Amenomope teaching that:

> He who does evil, the shore rejects him
> Its flood water carries him away and
> The North wind descends to end his hour.
> (IV, 12-14)

And in the positive sense, he says:

> Set your goodness before the people. Then you will be greeted by all . . . . Guard your tongue from injurious speech, then you will be loved by others. You will find your place in the house of God. And you will share the offerings of your lord. You will be honored when your coffin conceals you. And you will be safe from the might of God. (X,17-XI,5)

Moreover, we have discussed about how the heated man fails but the geru maa, the truly self-mastered flourishes (VI,1-12). Likewise, Amenomope says, "The boat of the greedy is abandoned in the mud, but the bark of the truly self-mastered sails with the wind" (X,10-11).

Especially clear in Amenomope is reliance on God to deal with the violators of Maat. One is to "lift up" the evil person, "give him your hand and leave him (in) the hands of God" (V,3-4). Also, in terms of the heated man, one should "withdraw from him. For God knows how to answer him" (V,16-17). He says one should not try to seek revenge for injury, but rather rely on God to insure that right will triumph. In a word, he says "settle down in the hands/arms of God and your self-mastery will overcome them" (XXII,7-8). Shirun-Grumach (1990) has shown the widespread and varied use of this metaphor and compared it with a similar one in Judaism. It is this emphasis on reliance on God that, as discussed above, has led to arguments that Maat as a lawful regularity is replaced with the intervention of God (Otto, 1954). But as argued above, this is not so, for as early as Ptahhotep, there is evidence of divine intervention (Ptahhotep, 115-116). Also, in the Middle Kingdom, Sinuhe also shows divine intervention in his obtaining fortune saying:

> Thus I became great, wealthy in goods and rich in cattle. It was God who acted so as to show mercy to one with whom he had been angry and whom he had made go astray to another land. For today his heart is appeased. (B146-149)

Therefore, concepts of Maat as both a lawful regularity results from action and a process of reward and punishment through divine intervention exists at the same time without contradiction. And there is no need to claim a special period for the divine impact on human life since it occurs

throughout the literature as Griffiths (1988) has cogently argued.

In the autobiographies there is abundant evidence of a positive reciprocal relationship between God and humans. One is clearly honored and worthy before God as before king and the people for having done Maat. To stand well with God is in fact to do Maat. And this achieved moral status and flourishing is in this life as well as in the next life. Thus, in the Old Kingdom, Pepiankh claims worthiness before the king, the Great God and the people for having done Maat. And in one of his declarations of Maat-doing, he says he judged justly "for I know that is what God wants" (Urk. I: 222.12). Henku, the nomarch, notes that he did good, spoke good and did not do evil to another "so that he would complain about it to God" (Urk. I:78.10-12).

By the 18th Dynasty, the positive reciprocal relations between God and humans based on Maat is expressed in ever clearer terms. Thus, the prime minister, Ahmes-Ametju, who served during the reign of Hatshepsut says:

> *iw nṯr (db3.f) isft n ir sy*
> *m3't n iy ḥr.s*
> *iḫ di.tw n.i m3't mi irt i sy*
> *ḏb3.tw n.i nfrw m sšrw nb*
>
> God will repay wrong to one who does it
> And Maat to one who brings it
> Thus, may I be given Maat as I have done it
> And may goodness be repaid me in every respect.
> (Urk. IV:492.5-8)

This relationship of reciprocity through Maat is also affirmed by the two brothers, Suti and Hor, architects of Amenhotep III. Each says to Ra that he is:

> One who did Maat for your heart
> For I know you are satisfied with Maat
> You make great one who does it on earth
> I did it and you made me great.
> (Urk. IV:1946.6-19)

The concept of reciprocity is also found in the royal texts, showing its acceptance as a central moral concept throughout Kemetic society. Thus, Thutmose III says: "The recompense of him who does excellent things is a reward for him of things more excellent than they" (BAR II:63.149). This is an interesting assertion for it goes beyond simple equal return and suggests God gives more good than the good that is done. Such an assertion posits a concept of God as both merciful and generous in his reciprocity. Hatshepsut speaks of her devotion to and deeds for Amen Ra and then says, "He made me rule the Black Land and the Red Land as a reward . . .I am his daughter in truth who serves him and knows what he has ordained" (Urk. IV:368.29-30, 31).

Finally, Neferabu, in a prayer to God in his name Ptah, Lord of Maat, says:

> *di.f 'nḫ wḏ3 snb*
> *spd ḥr ḥswt mrwt*
> *irty ḥr 'Imn in ẖrt r' nb*
> *mi irtw n m3'ty did 'Imn*
> *n ib.f*

> May he give life, prosperity and health,
> alertness, favors and love
> And that my eyes may see Amen every day

As is done for a Maatian person who has set
Amen in his heart.
(James, 1970:36, pl.31)

Thus, again, for those who set Amen in their hearts and do Maat, the good of life is given them.

Reciprocity as a divine reward for Maat-doing develops into its most expressive form in the Late Period especially, in the moral self-presentations of the priests of Amen in the 22nd and 23rd Dynasties (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985). Here the priests show the dynamic interaction of God and humans in reciprocal relations whose grounding is Maat. Therefore, Nakhtefnut says:

nty ḥr mw.f n n.f ḥ3
w'b n.f n mrḥ
ḥnk n.f m3't r' nb
n ḥ3w-ib m rk.f

One who is on his water has no want. He who is pure for him without fail and who offers him Maat each day has no sorrow in his life time.

He goes on to pray to God saying, "May you love your servant as he loves you. And may you cause him to endure in your house unendingly" (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:444.6-7).

Likewise, the priest of Hor says:

God turned his face toward me as a reward for that which I had done. He allowed me to become old on earth in a very beautiful and long life-time. (Otto, 1954:188)

Also, he states that:

Whoever is kind, God is kind to them. Whoever does (good), then (God) does it for him. He favors those who do (good) and punishes those who do not do (it). Ra goes forth and observes behavior, and He rewards the deed of one who does it. (Otto, 1954:189)

Finally, Hor says of Maat-doing and the reward of God:

> When I offered him the Maat he loves, the loaf of his which is myrrh I said 'when the morrow comes the virtuous person is rewarded for what he has done.' (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:516.8-9)

Hor's assertions point to several interrelated concepts. The first is that God turns his face toward or favor those who do Maat. The second is that the species of good which one gives others is returned by that kind of good from God. A third concept is that punishment is given to those who do not do good, and fourthly that Ra goes forth and observes human behavior so that he may reward the deeds of those who do them. And finally, in his last assertion, Hor seems to pose the reward of Maat as a natural consequence clearly established and insured by God, but not the result of divine intervention as in his other assertions. This, again shows that both concepts, i.e., Maat as lawful regularity and divine impact on human affairs, are not mutually exclusive but unavoidably interrelated and interactive.

This stress on reciprocity as a central moral relationship continues throughout the Late Period. It is often expressed in a form used in one of Hor's assertions. This is often phrased in the following manner:

> Ra goes forth, observes and perceives the behavior of those who do it. Whoever does good, to him he will do good. And whoever does evil he will do it to him equally. (Otto, 1954:190; see also 190, n.1 and; Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:191, 193 n.aq)

Also, Montemhet, priest and Governor in the 25th Dynasty and beginning of the 26th Dynasty says:

> This God does good for one who does it. And I knew his favorite is the Maatian person. I did what was useful for God and good for the people. (Otto, 1954:158).

And finally, in the period of Greek domination, the high priest Petosiris reaffirms the centrality of reciprocity in relations between humans and God saying:

> He who keeps his heart on the way of God
> Maintains his life span on earth
> He who has great respect of God in his heart has great favor on earth. (Lefebvre, 1923 II:38.62.2)

Here, Maat-doing is posed as the way of God, as noted above. But the practice and its reward remain the same: a good and long life on this earth and a glorious life in the hereafter.

VIII

MAATIAN SOCIAL PRACTICE II

8.1 *Im3h Hr Rmt Kywy* - Worthiness Before Others

8.1.1 Introduction

Worthiness before other persons--*im3h hr rmt kywy*--is by far the greatest concern of the Declarations of Innocence. In fact, the first concern is that one does no wrong to people (A 1). This reflects the Maatian assumption that in the final analysis, although God is the author of Maat, it is in human relations and actions that Maat is most definitively expressed. In a word, doing Maat among humans is the fundamental way of doing Maat for God. This does not diminish the importance of specific duties to nature or specific duties to God. But it does give greater stress to practice in the human community which is never in isolation or without direct or indirect implications for relations with God and nature.

The concept of worthiness before others is a long standing pillar of Maatian ethics, emerging in textual evidence in the Old Kingdom and continuing through the New

Kingdom stress in the DOI to Late Period Declarations of Virtue. Thus, Nefer-seshem-Ptah says he did Maat for he "wished to be worthy before God and before all the people--*mrr(.i) wnn im3ḫ hr Nṯr ḫr rmṯ nb*" (Urk. I:201.7; Edel, 1981: fig.29). Idu makes a similar statement saying his Maat-doing was done with the desire "to be one worthy before God and before people forever--*wnn im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr ḫr rmṯ ḏt*" (Urk. I:204.10). Her-Ankh-em-Sesi offers an alternative yet similar phrasing saying he did Maat for "I wished that my name be good before God and before people--*mr.i nfr rn ḫr Nṯr ḫr rmṯ*" (Urk. I:203.3). The priest, Kentika, says he did good because "*mr(.i) nfr rn(.i) ḫr Nṯr im3ḫ(y) ḫr rmṯ nb*--I wished that my name be good before God and one worthy before all people" (James, 1953:D10,3).

Likewise, the priest Wr-hww, speaking of his significant others says he is "one worthy before those who are with me--*im3ḫ ḫr ntyw ḥn'.f.*" And Pepi-ankh-her-ib sums up the desire to stand worthy before God, society and the people saying of his record of Maat-doing "*ink im3ḫ ḫr nswt ink im3ḫ ḫr Nṯr '3 ink im3ḫ ḫr rmṯ*--I am worthy before the King. I am worthy before the Great God. I am worthy before the people" (Urk. I:222.3-5). Thus, worthiness before others is a central Maatian moral tenet, quest and claim and it is based on the simple yet profound and indispensable claim and practice reflected in the treasurer Sarenput's statement,

"*ir.n(.i) m3't n rmṯ* --I have done Maat for the people" (Urk. VII:8.3).

The moral claims of worthiness in the Declarations of Innocence are posed in the form of disavowal of having committed a series of offenses in order to claim innocence. They are made in the context of judgment and seek to establish innocence by denying the commission of offenses against God, humans and nature. Innocence here as a general category of blamelessness (i.e., *šw m isft*) contains both the concept of moral blamelessness (i.e., *šw m ḫww*) and spiritual purity (*'bw*). Thus, the DOI begin with the statement "What one should say upon arriving at the Great Hall of Maati so that he may be cleansed from all wrong-doing (*ḫww*) which he has done . . ." (Coming Forth, Ch. 125). This statement speaks to the need to declare moral innocence. But the need to possess spiritual purity is affirmed at the end of the first set of declarations where the person judged also claims purity. Also, he claims it again at the end of the second set of declarations saying, "I am one clean (*w'b*) of mouth and clean of hands, one to whom it is said, 'Welcome; come in peace' by those who see him/her . . . ."

And finally, in the following chapter, as well as in other passages, there is a request that the Divine removes any evil (*ḏw*) and blot out any offense (*isft*) which still attaches itself to the judged (Ch. 126). The divine judges

respond saying "Come, we remove your evil, we blot out your offenses. That which would harm you, is removed. We do away with any evil which attaches to you." It has been suggested that these assertions lean toward magical conceptions. But an alternative interpretation is that these assertions are clearly in harmony with a standard tenet in Kemetic theology concerning God, i.e., that "He saves whomever He will even though they are already in the Otherworld" (pLeiden I 350:III,15; Karenga, 1984:22). Moreover, the governing interests in this text is its ethical and spiritual content. Thus, whereas I recognize the importance of *ḥk3w* (words of power) in Kemetic religion, I will deal essentially with its ethics and spirituality and thus, ask of each concept or practice what does it mean ethically and spiritually.

The Declarations of Innocence which deal with worthiness before others in section (A) includes affirmations of having:

not done wrong to people (1)
not impoverished (one's) family or friends (*wnḏwt*) (2)
not begun the day by demanding more than is due (one) (6)
not let one's name reach the office of the overseer of servants (7)
not deprived the orphan of his property (8)
not slandered a servant to his superior (10)
not caused anyone pain (11)
not caused anyone to hunger (12)
not caused anyone to weep (13)
not killed anyone (14)
not commanded anyone to kill (15)
not done what is harmful to people (16)
not committed fornication (20)

not ejaculated (21)
not lessened the acre (23)
not encroached on the fields of others (24)
not added to the weight of the scales (25)
not tampered with the tongue of the scales (26) and
not taken milk from the mouth of children (27)

And the Declarations of Innocence of section (B) include affirmations of having:

not stolen (2)
not been covetous (3)
not robbed (4)
not killed people (5)
not done fraudulent things (7)
not told lies (9)
not been sulky (11)
not extorted (14)
not stolen bread rations (15)
not eavesdropped (16)
not been talkative (17)
not contended except concerning (one's) own property (18)
not committed adultery (19)
not been unchaste (20)
not caused fear (21)
not mislead (22)
not been hot-tempered (23)
not been deaf to words of truth (24)
not caused strife (25)
not winked (at injustice) (26)
not practiced illicit sex (27)
not been false (28)
not quarrelled with another (29)
not been aggressive (30)
not been impatient (31)
not misrepresented my nature (32)
not gossiped about matters (33)
not been loud of voice (37)
not been vain (39)
not made distinction (of others) from myself (40)
not had needs greater than my own property (41)

In addition to these specifically named offenses directed toward people, there are those which are more general and include having: (A) not done wrong instead of

right (3) and not done evil (*bw ḏw*) (5); (B) not done wrong (isfet) (1), and not acted evilly (*bin*) (34). It is of interest that there are three different disavowals of general wrongdoing using three different words for it--*bw ḏw*, evil; isfet--the most general category for wrong which is also used in opposition to Maat; and bin--evil or bad to say "I have not acted evilly," perhaps to say "with malice." This repeated reference is obviously meant by the claimant to disavow any and all forms of wrongdoing. And it is also a stress by the writers of the DOI on varieties of general evil and the call for their rejection.

Again, it is important to note that the Declarations of Innocence are posed in the negative in order to claim innocence in the context of the post-mortem judgment. The claim of innocence, as argued above, is one of both moral blamelessness and spiritual purity which of course has ritual aspects also. The central thrust, however, is moral blamelessness which is the basis both for the claim of and request for spiritual purity and the ultimate justification or vindication (*m3ʿ ḫrw*) which the one who is being judged seeks. Thus, the claims are declarations of innocence which contain concepts of virtue and avoidance.

This dual thrust of avowal of virtue and disavowal of vice is best expressed in the Declarations of Virtue which, as noted above, are the fundamental source of the DOI. Thus, in his autobiography, the priest Djedkhonsefankh says:

> I am one who was truly self-controlled
> One who was well-disposed before his Lady
> My mouth was equipped with Maat
> No lie came forth from my body
> And my heart did not contemplate evil
> I went forth as one contented
> I did not raise my voice
> I was not violent (*kḫb*)
> I was not rapacious (*'wn*)
> I was not covetous (*ḥnty*) of another and
> I was not resentful (*bk-ib*) towards a person
> in his house
> I did this in order that my name might be
> good on earth among the living forever.
> (Roveri, 1967:115-116)

Here, then, one has both avowal of virtues, i.e., self-control, good disposition, truthfulness, contentment and disavowal of vices, i.e., loudness, violence, rapacity, covetousness, resentment. These are both interlocking and mutually implicative, suggesting and reaffirming each other.

Roveri (1967) who publishes this text, does not seem to understand this mutually implicative and interrelated character of the disavowals and the affirmations in the Declarations of Virtue. He (1967:113) concedes, following Otto (1954), that

> l'ideale di vita che traspare é quello di un uomo devoto é sollecito nelle sue funzioni sacerdotali, di carattere controllato, sincero e onesto verso il prossimo."

But he then goes on to say that it is "an ideal somewhat limited" because it is based on avoidance of evil rather than doing good. This, of course, is neither true for the Declarations of Virtue and Declarations of Innocence nor the general Maatian ideal of which they are component parts. For both avowal of virtue and avoidance of vice are consti-

tutive parts of the Maatian ideal. And they are linked in mutually engendered and mutually defining relationships. In a word, they are mutually implicative.

Thus, all the claims of avoidance imply first a virtue of moral discipline which reaffirm the Maatian emphasis on self-mastery. Also, all claims of avoidance of species of wrongdoing imply commitment to the practice of opposite virtues. Thus, the claim of commitment not to kill implies the opposite commitment to respect life; the commitment not to lie, the commitment to truth; the commitment not to do evil, the commitment to do good and the commitment not to wink at injustice or deprive, the commitment to do justice and give just due. Of course, this correlation is not automatic and it is possible that one might simply do the bare minimum, i.e., not do evil but not actively do good either. I say "not actively do good" because not doing evil is, in fact, a form of good. But if one is to speak seriously of commitment to Maat, the texts clearly show that one cannot simply not do evil. On the contrary, one must, at the same time, actively do good. In a word, it is not enough not to tell lies, one must also tell the truth.

It is in this sense that one must always view the DOI in relationship to the Declarations of Virtue. For the DOV are in fact not only the source of the DOI but most often present the positive side of their negative assertion, although as shown above, the DOV in many cases contain both

positive and negative assertions of virtue. Nevertheless, their essential thrust is to affirm virtue and in this way provide the positive dimension to the DOI's disavowals of wrongdoing. Therefore, whereas the DOI say "I have not lied" and "I did not wink at injustice," the virtues say "I spoke truth, I did justice." And whereas the DOI say "I did not steal or deprive the vulnerable," the DOV say "I gave food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to cross over to those who had none." As noted in chapter IV, the DOI evolved from the DOV and thus, imply commitment to the positive virtue of every disavowal of wrongdoing.

Again, all of this moral discourse and practice is directed toward standing worthy before history and heaven, God and humans and ultimately before nature. Worthiness before humans, then, stands as a pivotal point between God and nature. It is a claim and quest which involve balance between heaven and earth, between the ultimately spiritual and the obviously physical. The Kemetic concept that the soul belongs to heaven and the body to earth reflects the human person's role which stands <u>between</u> and <u>within</u> both spheres of reality. And it is ethics or rather moral thought and practice which not only link the two but also grounds the worthiness each human person claims.

8.1.2 The Maatian Concept of Human Dignity

The fundamental point of departure for both the discourse on moral worthiness and the practice to achieve it is, in Maatian ethics, the recognition of and respect for the inherent worthiness of the human person, i.e., the dignity of the human person. It is no accident that the Declarations of Innocence begin with the assertion, "I have not done wrong to people--*n ir.i isft r rmṯ*." For the validity of any claim to moral worthiness before humans, rests on the ability to truthfully declare that one has not done anything that violates the inherent dignity of the human person. It is important also that the word *isfet* is used in the claim of not having done wrong to people. For isfet is an inclusive concept of varieties of wrong and the clearest and most comprehensive opposite of Maat. Thus, to make such a claim reflects the pivotal importance of the human person to Maatian ethics and of the concept of human dignity which undergirds and expresses this significance.

It is a long-held and general assumption that the Judeo-Christian tradition is the first to recognize and respect this intrinsic worth of humans and argue for the sanctity of life (Lecky, 1894 II, 18ff; Sidgwick, 1931: 122ff). Bedau (1986:176) in his discussion of the morality of capital punishment gives a widely accepted and sweeping generalization concerning this. He argues that the idea of the sanctity of human life derives from biblical sources,

especially Genesis 1:27 which says that "God created man in his own image." He concedes that other ancient peoples, like the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians and Babylonians "showed interest in and concern for the value of human life." However, in spite of this, he concludes:

> the idea that human life is of transcendent worth, independent of the value that can be placed on a person by virtue of efforts, accomplishments, talents or any other measure, and that this worth is equal for all and owing to something divine in humans-this is an inescapably religious notion and it is biblical in origin.

Frankena (1983:11-12) basically agrees with this assessment, noting that most historians of European morals agree on the central role of Judaism and Christianity in the development of "the sense of the sanctity of human life." Moreover, he says, they also agree "that there was either little or no recognition of the sanctity of life in ancient pagan culture."

Dismissing the pejorative category "pagan" and turning to a more objective assessment, the historical record does not support this claim for Judaism and Christianity. On the contrary, it is the Maatian tradition which offers the earliest evidence of the concept of human dignity and its central pillar, the sanctity of life. The Jewish concept of humans in the image of God (Genesis, 1:27) from which their concept of human dignity is derived is preceded by the ancient Egyptian concept of the image of God which is introduced in Maatian literature at least a thousand years

before. As noted above in chapter VI on Maatian anthropology, the *snn ntr* or imago dei conception in Maatian ethics is introduced in the Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara in the First Intermediate Period, more specifically in the 10th Dynasty (c. 2140-2130 B.C.E.). Here Kheti says of humans "*snnw.f pw pri.w m ḥ'w.f*--they are his images and came from his body" (132). This passage not only provides the earliest known concept of humans as the images of God, but it also poses them as the children or offspring of God. For it says they come from his body and as Ockinga (1984:52) notes, this indicates filiation. This is reaffirmed when Kheti refers to humans also as *msw.f*, i.e., His (God's) children (133).

This concept is also found in the autobiographies and the Declarations of Virtues which they contain in this same Intermediate Period. In these texts like that of the high priest, Rudjahau, both the concepts of *snn ntr* and *miti ntr*, the likeness of God are used (Faulkner, 1951: fig.1:4-5). These texts indicate that humans are like or in the image of God in thought and action. This conception is reaffirmed in the New Kingdom text of Ani. Here the possessor of both knowledge and moral sensitivity expressed in empathetic listening is posed as the definite image of God--*snn ntr* (Ani, 10.8-9). It is from these conceptions about humans as the image of God that leads to the development of concepts of human dignity and the sanctity of human life, as was the later development of this idea in Judaism and Christianity.

Nowhere is the concept of human dignity and its inherent concept of the sanctity of life more clearly presented than in the Narratives of Wonder (p. Berlin 3033; Blackman, 1988). This text is important not only because of its direct reference to the sanctity of life and human dignity based on the *snn nṯr* concept, but also because of the rich context of interpretation it affords us. Although the setting of the narratives is the Old Kingdom, the text is a Middle Kingdom (c.2040-1650) document and fits within the rich varied and abundance of literature which develops in this period. The narrative with which we are concerned is the one which surrounds the legendary magician Djedi and his visit to the court of King Khufu. As the story develops, Djedi is brought to court both to entertain and inform the king. The king is first interested in verifying whether Djedi, as it is reported, can rejoin a severed head. And it is at this juncture that the issue of human dignity and the sanctity of human life emerges.

Djedi informs the king that he can indeed do such a thing. And the king then orders that a prisoner be brought from prison so that he may be executed for the experiment. Djedi, however, objects saying:

> *in is n rmṯ ity nb.i*
> *mk n wḏ.tw irt mnt iry n t3 'wt špst*
>
> But not to a human being, O' Sovereign,
> My Lord
> Surely, it is not permitted to do such a
> thing to the noble cattle of God.

The king concedes and a duck is brought instead for the experiment.

Inherent in Djedi's defense of the prisoner's right to life is a defense of the sanctity of life. Moreover, inherent in this defense of the sanctity of life is a defense of the right to be free from experimentation. Taken together these moral contentions express a clear concept of human dignity which again predates the Judeo-Christian concept by at least a thousand years. This reflects an anthropology which posits life as the first and most fundamental human right and which, in turn, lays the ground for discussing the quality of that life throughout human history to the current era. Certainly, there is contained in this brief passage and exchange no broad concept of dignity and rights such as would develop in modern times as expressed in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, even as there is no such broad concept in the Book of Kheti (132, 133) or the Judeo-Christian text of Genesis (1:27). But clearly, this is a beginning source of discourse on human rights in such a manner, in fact, the earliest such discourse. And this in itself is noteworthy and valuable. For it differs from both the Khetian assertion and its subsequent Genesis parallel in that whereas Kheti and Genesis simply state that humans are in the image of God, Djedi asserts the most fundamental meaning of this: to wit their dignity and thus their meriting special treatment as befits the noble (*šps*t)

images of God. And this special treatment, Djedi states, begins with the right to life and freedom from acts (in this case, experimentation) which denies the special moral considerability due to the noble images of God.

Therefore, in modern Maatian tradition, these ancient texts become a central source for discussing modern issues of human rights and human dignity and is thus used, as are other ancient texts in other traditions, to lay the basis for a more expanded discourse. Certainly, then, this text is an ancient and worthy intellectual source also for discussing not only issues of capital punishment, murder, etc., but also the immorality of experimenting on humans such as what was done to Africans during the Holocaust of Enslavement, the Nazi experiments on Africans, Jews, Gypsies and others, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiments by the U.S. government on Africans as well as experiments on Africans in general or other vulnerable peoples. It also becomes an important textual referent for discussions of prisoner's rights and by extension the moral requirements for the quality of life of any human being regardless of her or his social position or historically incurred status.

Both the use of the prisoner to make this case and the challenge posed to the king by Djedi are instructive concerning this earliest written example of respect for human dignity. First, the prisoner is excellent for the case because he is a marginal and dishonored person. He has been

marginalized by his implicit anti-social behavior and his resultant loss of status and separation from the community. Thus, he is vulnerable to being perceived as unworthy of respect, freedom or even life. In a word, he is vulnerable to being considered expendable. But Djedi suggests that in spite of the social position in which the prisoner finds himself, he is still a human being (*rmṯ*) and thus a bearer of dignity in this special status.

Secondly, the narrative, as a contribution to conceptualization of the foundational principle of human dignity, offers an important aspect of it in its having Djedi to raise the question of respect for the human person to the king. This is important first because it is a clear example of boldly speaking truth to those in power. And secondly, it becomes more important in a context in which the king's command is law and in which not only is the king God's representative on earth, but is also divine himself. Thus, for Djedi to pose this challenge to the king affirms the importance and weight of this concept in Maatian ethics.

The strength of Djedi's case lay in the long standing Maatian tradition of prohibiting human mistreatment and the taking of human life. As early as the 5th Dynasty, the ethical claim is made in moral self-presentations that "I never did what was hurtful to any person--*n sp ir(.i) šnnt rmṯ nb*)" (Urk. I:47.5). And in the First Intermediate Period King Kheti tells his son Merikara:

> Beware of punishing wrongfully,
> Do not kill, it does not serve you
> Punish with beatings, with detention
> Thus the land will be well-established.

Kheti then clearly prohibits killing and states that it is not in one's interests to engage in it. He also places special emphasis on not killing the innocent saying, "Do not kill a man whose goodness you know, with whom you once chanted the writings, who was brought up . . .before God" (50-51).

However, he subsequently offers a qualification to this prohibition against killing. Thus, he says, this holds true "except for the rebel whose plans are found out. For God smites the rebel in blood." Rebellion against the state is equated with rebellion against Maat, the created order and thus against the will (Maat) of God. Such a parallel is drawn in the text when Kheti towards the end of his Sebait, recalls human rebellion against God and God's response, saying, "He slew his foes, reduced his children when they thought of making rebellion" (133-134). This act against the Maatian order is clearly perceived as a special case, but the moral rule of not killing stands.

This, of course, is clear in the DOI which evolve in the New Kingdom. Here, we have not only the moral injunction not to kill but also not to order killing (A 14, A 15). The first injunction is against direct taking of life; the second is an injunction against complicity in killing. Surely, this is a clear reaffirmation of the value of life

and the resultant need to respect it. Frankena (1983:1-2) has noted the sanctity of life and respect for life as both different and imply each other. He states that "If one has respect for life, one believes that life has sanctity and vice versa. (And) If one believes we should respect life, one believes in the sanctity of life and vice versa."

The Maatian tradition offers two basic warrants for the concept of the dignity of human persons, both of which are found in the Djedi narrative. For Djedi identifies the prisoner in two basic ways and in doing so, provides us with two essential warrants for this foundational norm of human dignity. His first identification of the prisoner is as a human being (*rmṯ*) and thus, one whom one cannot kill. This suggests the prisoner has a dignity by virtue of his species membership, and this species-dignity gives him a transcendent status. Djedi's use of the word *rmṯ* places it in distinction to things or animals. And his acceptance of the duck as a substitute for the prisoner in the experiment, reveals an assumption of the human persons' transcendence over the world of both animals and things.

As noted above in the section on anthropology, the human as the image of God, is essentially defined by free will, heart/mind and resultant agency. This human defining feature of mental and moral consciousness is reflected in one word for humans or people, i.e., *rhyt*, the knowers, possessors of knowledge, etc. Thus, as a human, one is a

conscious being who knows good and evil, and who knows the God that dwells in humans and acts accordingly. The human person, then, is self-conscious, capable of moral choice and action and thus, the fundamental focus of moral concern and moral instruction. Moreover, it is important to note that the word for human being (*rmṯ*) is written in the Djedi narrative with both the male and female determinatives. Although it can be written with simply a male determinative, it is significant that this category of being human is written here to include both man and woman in the defense of human life and human dignity.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the prisoner, who has no name in the narrative because he is randomly selected, is an important character also because even in his anonymity, he represents the personal as well as collective character of human dignity. The concept of dignity that Djedi suggests resides not simply in the species, but also in each person, regardless of his or her status. For Djedi's defense of the prisoner's right to live was raised not as a question of acquired status, membership in society or relation to people of stature. On the contrary, his objection to the use of a prisoner in a deadly experiment is simply that he is a human being. It is, thus, a defense of human qua human.

And it is from the recognition and respect of men and women as humans that Djedi suggests a natural right to life

for humans. Djedi could have argued that one could not kill the prisoner because of his being an Egyptian. But it would not have been as morally compelling an argument. The natural right argument is superior, for a natural right is grounded in the status of being human, not being a member of a particular society. As Bird (1967:129) states, "although a natural right may exist only in a society of men, a man possesses it because he is a man, and not because he is a citizen, or subject of a given society." It is clear that what Djedi identifies here and seeks to defend is "species dignity" as distinct from self-possessive dignity. This distinction between _dignity by association_ and _dignity as self-possession_ which Kohl (1975:133) draws is important. The first kind of dignity, dignity by association or species dignity, is accorded to a person just because of one's membership in this special status group called humans. The second kind, dignity as self-possession, on the other hand, is determined by one's capacity to exercise "control over the major and significant aspects of one's life, as well as the ofttimes necessary condition of not being treated disrespectfully" (Kohl, 1975:131). This latter conception presupposes the former and reflects an evaluation concerning the capacity for life rather than simply the valuing of human life in itself. For Djedi, the issue is the life, itself, of the prisoner, not one of capacity for a quality life.

Although there is a concern for the quality of life in the material and psychological sense in ancient Maatian ethics in its concern for the vulnerable, the concept of self-possessive dignity emerges most definitively in modern times with the expansion of discourse on the ethics of bio-medical practices to terminate and prolong life (Maclaren, 1977; Kohl, 1975; Downie, 1969; Shils, 1968). Thus, Djedi does not ground his argument for human dignity in the Kantian concept of autonomy as the basis of dignity (Kant, 1964:99). Nor does he have to confront the modern questions of conditions and quality and meaning of life in the context of new biomedical technology. His task is simply to defend the right to life of humans who have a special status first as humans, then as divine images of God.

It is this characteristic of human beings, as *snnw nṯr* --images of God, that is an early and fundamental object of moral concern in Maatian ethics, as noted above. And it is also Djedi's second warrant for respect for human dignity by not killing the prisoner. It is this warrant which most definitely undergirds the special status of humans. For although Djedi claims for humans special status as a species first, he reinforces his argument by telling the king "Surely, it is not permitted to do such a thing to the noble cattle of God." Djedi's use of the statement "It is not permitted" signifies that it is not permitted by God, that one kills his "noble cattle." The literal meaning of "*n*

wḏ.tw" is "it is not commanded," but it is an idiomatic way of saying "It is not permitted." Also, it is usually used in reference to God and king and since the king is being addressed here, it is obvious that God is the one who has ruled killing as prohibited. This is also clear from the fact that only God could command a king.

The use of the phrase *'wt špst*--noble cattle or noble herd, has its roots in the theological anthropology of Maat and is related to both the concept of humans as *snn nṯr* or imago dei and the concept of God as the "*Mniw Nfr*--The Good Herdsman" which precedes and parallels the Judeo-Christian conceptions of the Good Shepherd (Müller, 1961), as discussed above. The use of Herdsman or Shepherd, represents the difference in paradigms of a cattle-raising culture versus a sheep-raising one. Thus, in Maatian texts, people are the noble herd or cattle of God and in Judeo-Christian texts they are the flock or sheep of God. But the essential paradigm is one of a caring and attentive God. The concept of the Divinity as the Good Herdsman is attested to as early as the Old Kingdom in the Pyramid Texts. But it is in the First Intermediate Period that the idea of humans as both the cattle of God and the image of God first appears.

The locus of this occurrence is again in the Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara. Here Kheti (130-132) says, "Well-cared for are humans, the cattle of God--*ḥn rmṯ 'wt Nṯr*." Then he notes that "He (God) made heaven and earth

for their sakes . . .they are his images which come from his body." He goes on to list how God (the Great Herdsman) cares for those who are in his image, providing for them and "guarding them by day and by night" (137). The "cattle" metaphor is thus used essentially to place humans in a relationship of care and concern by God as the Great Herdsman. But it also reflects the traditional Kemetic symbolic use of animals, in this case cattle, to suggest characteristics and relationships of both humans and the Divine. Thus, even as humans are referred to as the "noble cattle," one of the basic ways to characterize the divine male principle is to refer to it as the "Great Bull" (Karenga, 1984:121) or the "Great Black Bull" (BCF, 185) and to the divine female principle as the "Celestial Cow" (BCF, 142, 162). And since the cattle metaphor is used to characterize both humans and the Divine, the phase "noble cattle of God" can be read as the "noble images of God." In this context, Djedi can be seen to say "Surely it is not permitted to do this to the noble images of God."

But the importance of Djedi's characterization of humans as the "noble cattle" or "noble images" of God lies not just in that it reaffirms that humans stand in a special relationship of care and concern with God as the Great Herdsman and that it reaffirms similarity in Divine and human characterization. It is also and equally important that humans are defined as "noble," i.e., *šps*. For it is

this word that serves as a central mode of defining human dignity. When Djedi defines even the prisoner as *špṣ*, he is pointing to a quality that is, of necessity, inherent in all humans, i.e., an intrinsic worth which morally compels respect. The word *špṣ* and its variations *špst, špsy, špss* all refer to a quality of being noble, well-esteemed, august, valuable, precious, costly and greatly respected (Faulkner, 1981:264-265; Wb. IV:445ff). The noun form *špss* or *špsw* points to the value of someone, one's valuableness, preciousness and nobility.

Nobility here assumes a moral status rather than a social one, although the two are interrelated in Maatian ethics. Thus, in the Book of Vindication (CT 27.I,79) one reads that nobility is an expression of moral character. The text says:

in m3ʿt irt sḫm.i
in snṯt.i irt šps.k

It is your righteousness that creates
your power.
It is your character that makes you noble.

Faulkner (1973, I:17) notes that "*snṯt*, lit. 'foundation,' of the other (Coffin) texts has been regarded as a figurative word for 'character' or 'disposition'." Thus, the central thrust of *šps* in this context and in the Djedi narrative is to define humans morally and spiritually in their relationship to God. Moreover, another indication that the use of *šps* here is not social but ethical is the fact that far from being noble in the social sense, the

prisoner is, on the contrary, ignoble, marginalized and dishonored. Therefore, the use of *šps* to refer to him is ever more morally significant. For it reaffirms the nobility, i.e., human dignity, of every human, even the marginalized and dishonored.

Certainly, this category is first encountered along with similar ones, i.e., *šfyt, s'ḥ, šf, šfšft,* etc., as a quality of those of a high social status. It is this form of socially generated respect and nobility which Goff (1979: 194ff) treats as "personal dignity." However, the category of dignity, in this case *špss,* which is attested to since the Pyramid Texts, evolves like the later Confucian category *chun-tzu*, nobleman, from an essentially social concept to a moral one (Tu, 1985:56-60). Thus, reaffirming the Book of Vindication's moral interpretation of nobility, cited above (CT 16.I,79), Duaerneheh says, "*Ink s'ḥ n irt.f*--I am a noble by what I have done" (Stewart, 1976:pl.15,8). Again, then, we see evidence of the evolution of the concept of nobility from an essentially social one, to a clearly moral one.

The concept shepes also parallels the transformation of the category dignitas in European ethics which originally was the quality and possession of the elite and which was eventually generalized in Western European culture by the influence of Judeo-Christian concepts (Maclaren, 1977:40). But again, in the Kemetic case, this transformation of

meaning is achieved very early in Maatian ethics. And by the First Intermediate Period, a period in which so many major changes are initiated, human dignity and its relatedness to humans' divine characteristics and human agency are clearly evident as argued above.

Thus, we not only encounter Djedi's defense of the sanctity of life and the right to life and therefore an clear defense of human dignity. But we also encounter, as mentioned above, Kheti's instruction against killing and his definition of humans possessing dignity (*špss*) as the noble images of God. Moreover, by the 11th Dynasty moral self-presentations include both stress on agency (*ib*, mind/heart and action), character (*ḳd*), worthiness (*iḳr, mnḫ*) and knowledge of self as related to the divine. Thus, Rediu Khnum says he is a possessor or bearer of dignity (*nb-sfyt*) . . .noble in appearance (*šps ḥ'w*) . . .godly to behold (*nṯry r m33*) . . .a possessor of character, one who is spoken of with love by the people (*nb ḳd mrrw m r n rmṯ*) . . .one who knows himself as a leader of people, a precious timber made by God (*ḫt šps ir.n nṯr*)" (Lange and Schäfer, 1908 I:164-167.3-4, 6, 19-20). It is important to note that Rediu Khnum uses both words *šfyt* and *šps*. His use of *šfyt* can be seen either in a moral or social sense or both. For it is in the context of a moral self-presentation which always has both a moral and social dimension. He uses *šps* first to describe his bodily appearance, literally his body

as noble or dignified in appearance. Also, his use of *šps* in the phrase "a precious or costly timber made by God" calls to mind Djedi's linking of *sps* and the Divine. For it's Rediu Khnum's having been made by God that makes him *šps*--valuable, costly, precious, august--in a word, a bearer of dignity.

Here, then, is humankind's earliest conception of the dignity of the human person, who is posed in the image of God, and thus invested with a special moral status and considerability. This Khetian assertion is reinforced in the same text and in the DOI by prohibitions against murder and ordering murder (A14, A15). And it is further reaffirmed by Djedi's defense of the socially marginal prisoner's right to life as a bearer of human dignity and divine investment of image and shared essence. This status as the noble image of God (*snn šps nṯr*) carries with it further defining dignity-grounding features such as rationality, moral sensitivity and moral practice. The first kind of dignity or worthiness is inherent; the second kind of dignity is based on capacities, abilities and achievements and points to modern conceptions of self-possessive dignity.

8.1.3 General Moral Concerns

Maatian ethics begin and develop in a concern for the quality of human relations and the respect for the human personality and community this requires. As noted above, it is a fundamental African ethical principle that the human

being realizes him or herself only in moral relations with others. The basis of fundamental concern, then, is never the isolated individual but the related person, the person-in-community (Mbiti, 1970; Gyekye, 1987; Menkiti, 1984).

Unlike Kant's transcendental subject or Rawls' (1971) unencumbered subject of an original position, the Maatian person is above all a person-in-community. He or she is a worthy citizen, loving father, instructing mother, dutiful son and daughter, a just king or queen, an effective counselor, pious priest or priestess. S/he is thus not stripped of all constitutive attachments which would cloud judgment, but encumbered with the history, discourse, relationships and self-understandings of a given community. In this context, location in community is key and thus the Declarations of Virtue start out with the phrase, "I was a worthy citizen" or "I have come from my city. I have done Maat there" as a way of grounding one's self. For as Sandel (1987:172) states, it is these kinds of loyalties to community and others and to convictions that accompany them

> whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are--as members of family or community or nation or people, as bearers of history, as sons and daughters of that revolution, as citizens of this republic.

The ground of ethical obligation towards humans is found in the divine nature of humans as discussed above. This attribution of divine image to the human person carries

within it an obligation to act a certain way towards others as well as towards oneself. One is obligated in fact to act like *R'-irt mi R'*. In a word, one must emulate God in his qualities of knowing and doing Maat, i.e., beneficence, generosity, loving-kindness, justice, reciprocity. Thus, the DOI, as posited above, represent not simply vices to abstain from but virtues to practice.

That the ground of ethical obligation is found in the Maatian or divine nature of humans contradicts or differs from Kant's (1959:5) stipulation that such grounding "must not be sought in the nature of man or in the circumstances he is placed, but sought a priori solely in the concepts of pure reason." For in Maatian ontology, humans understand themselves in terms of what Sandel (1987) calls "constitutive attachment and projects." Such attachments begin on an ontological level with self-understanding as being in the image of God, and having a like nature, a shared essence. They continue on the social level with constitutive attachments of family, city and nation. And they conclude with obligatory projects of Maatian behavior as expressed in the Declarations of Virtue and of course, the Declarations of Innocence. Given this, there can really be no unencumbered selves. For our situatedness in community and history prohibits it and attachments make it at best a theoretical protection. Again, the theology and ethics in the Declarations of Innocence and Virtue reflect these obligations.

And one is also obligated, as the texts teach, to preserve and share the legacy and pass it on to future generations (Daumas, 1962).

Thus, the DOI offer a series of vices to avoid and by implication, virtues to practice which aid one in becoming and remaining worthy in community. There are first a list of general prohibitions against harm to others. One should, the text says: not do wrong to people (A1); not impoverish familiars (A2); not to cause pain (A11); not to cause anyone to weep (A13); not do what is harmful to people (A16); not transgress (the laws of Maat) (B12); not mislead (people) (B22); not be deaf to truth (B24); not to cause strife (B25); not wink at injustice (B26); and not to discriminate (B40). These prohibitions pose a general framework for the more specific vices to be avoided which are posed also.

The first two obligations in the Declarations of Innocence (A), then, are not to mistreat fellow human beings. The first is not to mistreat people in general and implicitly those you do not know. The second is not to mistreat or rather not to impoverish familiars. The first obligation is literally not to do wrong or isfet to people as people, remetchet. It is again a reflection of the Maatian stress on respect for the human personality and his worth and dignity as a fellow human being. Here we are reminded of Paheri's declaration that "I know the God that dwells in man. And knowing him I knew this from that (i.e.,

right from wrong) and performed the tasks (accordingly) (Urk. IV:119.15--120.1). Knowing the divinity of the human person, Paheri acted toward them according, never confusing the messenger with the message, never speaking vulgar words or associating with the wrongdoers, making his good character raise him up and always being the model of kindness.

The second obligation is not to impoverish your family and friends, literally your familiars. The word used is (*wndwt*) or "wendjut" which does not simply mean associates as Faulkner (1981:61) cites, but also familiars, one's circle of significant others, i.e., family, friends, neighbors, etc. But it could by extension also mean fellow human beings in a more intimate way than "remetchet." Thus, wendjut are the human others so essential to moral conception and conduct. These are one's measure and mirror in both the moral and social sense. They are the "neighbor" you should not bear false witness against in Jewish and Christian ethics, "the brother and sister of faith" to whom you are obligated in Islamic ethics (Khadduri, 1984), and the fellow human you must recognize and respect in Confucian and Hindu ethics (Tu, 1985; Murthy, 1985).

The value of the category is that it allows for both an intimate and general definition of others, i.e., family and friends, neighbor and fellow humans. In the Husia (Karenga, 1984:109), I translated wendjut to mean "family and associates" but it could just as well been translated by other

words. In fact, various authors have translated it in various ways. For example, Rossiter (1979:91) translated it as "kindred;" Allen (1974:97) as "people;" Faulkner (1985: 29) as "associates;" and Budge (1898:191) as "members of my family."

Another fruitful concept in the declaration is that of not impoverishing one's familiars. It is worth reflection to consider how one might impoverish one's fellow or familiar. The word is <u>semar</u> (*sm3r*), meaning impoverish or make wretched. It is a challenging concept, one which taken in the positive means we are obligated or at least should strive to enrich our relationships with others. This at a minimum means always adding something new and positive to them and always being concerned with maintaining and practicing reciprocity. On the other hand, it means at least to keep what is good and do not lose anything of value you share in the relationship.

It is important to note here that some authors have wondered why the Declarations make no mention of family relations. But this category, <u>wendjut</u>, might have been inclusive of relations with family as argued above. Certainly, family relations were key in both the Virtues and the Sebait and one could legitimately expect them in the Declarations. Thus, the reference to <u>wendjut</u> might have seemed sufficient. Moreover, as Petrie (1948:146-147), says:

> (i)t would be quite possible that in a matriarchal society, the permanent bond of family was not

> looked on as entailing duties different in kind than those equally due to relatives and neighbors in general.

Again, "wendjut" appears relevant here and accepting Petrie's stress on what is more correctly called the "matrifocal" character of the African or Egyptian family, one could see how the ethic of care and responsibility would be more generalized (Diop, 1959, 1974). Therefore, the community would become a kind of extended family and the naturalness of the relations would not seem to necessitate direct and singular mention of one's family as distinct from other familiars.

Moreover, Petrie (1948:147) states,

> . . .in the historical ages of the Vth and XIXth Dynasties, the family duties are far more lightly touched on than we would expect and there is none of that clannish sense of solidarity which is the basis of society to western peoples.

Thus, he concludes, the absence of stress on particular family duties may suggest a broad sense of fellow human obligation and sensitivity. And in such a case, "the absence of certain classes of feelings and ideas may often show more than the presence of particular injunctions." Finally, it is important to note that the Sebait and Virtues are full of obligations to one's family and therefore, there is no neglect in Maatian ethical literature of this obligation. But in the DOI, a broader sense of human obligation is suggested and affirmed.

A second set of offenses to be avoided are specific acts of violence. We have addressed the meaning of the prohibition against killing in defense of human dignity and the sanctity of life. However, it is important to note also that the prohibition is an extensive one. In addition to the moral obligation not to kill (A14, B5), and the obligation not to order anyone to be killed (A15), there is in another version of the DOI, the added obligation not to order killing by falsehood (Maystre, 1937:37). This added stipulation "*m grg*--by falsehood" (Maystre, 1937:38) interprets as meaning "en degagement ma responsabilité." But more than a disengagement from one's responsibility, this represents murder aggravated by falsehood. And falsehood (*grg*) is one of the main characteristics of the isfetic person. In fact, *grg* is used often as the opposite of Maat, in a word, as the essence of isfet.

Naturally, any serious ethics must deal with prohibitions against taking human life, which shows the ultimate disrespect of the human person. For the implication here is that not only is the sanctity of life violated but the moral community is degraded and diminished. And in positing not only an injunction against killing but also against commanding another to kill, the DOI assert that one does not escape moral responsibility by having another do one's immoral work. In a word, one is made responsible not only for what

one does directly, but also for what one contributes to indirectly, especially when falsehood is attached to it.

One is also obligated not to terrorize or rob anyone which are other forms of violence. Thus, one is also obligated not to rob (B4), extort (B14) or be aggressive (B30). This prohibition is reaffirmed in the Sebait of Ptahhotep who says, "Do not terrorize people for if you do, God will punish you accordingly" (Zába, 1956:24). The law of reciprocity, he teaches, insures that what is done to others will be done to you.

Likewise, injunctions against causing pain (or) suffering (A11), hunger (A12) and even making another cry (A13) also appear in the Declarations. These injuries, like violence, represent inadequate respect for the human person and implicitly cultivate the grounds for erosion and undermining of moral community. Thus, onc must not only be innocent of large offenses (causing hunger, pain, suffering) but also sensitive enough to avoid what seems to be small offenses (making another cry), for each represents damage to the social and moral fabric of community. One should always do what strengthens community, friendship and fellow human sensitivity and then one can always draw from the rich treasure of positive and reciprocal relations. Again, the lesson is one must build the community in which one wants to live.

The obligations not to injure persons by violating their personal and family relations and space are also important. Therefore, gossiping (B33), slander (A10), eavesdropping (B16), talkativeness (B17) and loudness of voice (B37) are prohibited in the Declarations. These represent one of the gravest offenses--the misuse of speech. Speech is both a special human gift and power but it can also be used as a weapon to destroy reputations, undermine trust among people, misinform and mislead. Thus, the Declarations teach restraint on the tongue, i.e., one should not lie, curse, engage in quarrelling, slander, be overly talkative or loud of voice. Likewise, the Sebait also teach against injurious speech, "One should not injure others with your tongue," Amenomope advises us (X 21). Moreover, Ani teaches that even as negative speech hurts others, it can also hurt one who is speaking by coming back on him or her. He says "a person can be ruined by his tongue. Beware and you will do well" (Ani, 8-9). And Ankhsheshonqi teaches that "If a man and woman are at peace with each other, they will never fare badly, but if they gossip about each other, they will never fare well" (AEL III:179).

Moreover, in another Late Period text, speech is also a central concern. The text says:

> As for speech it is like fire
> And an answer ignored is a flame
> - - - - - - - -
> If you are silent (self-mastered) a good
> outcome will come to you.

> You will answer with what is good.
> (Kitchen, 1970:203-206.1, 10)

Finally, the importance of good speech in doing Maat is also reaffirmed in the texts which speak of offering Maat to God. In many cases, good speech and truth are the paradigms for offering Maat. Thus, Meni says "I spoke truly so as to raise up (offer) Maat to its Lord" (Urk. I:269.9). And Sennedjesui says, "I have spoken what the great love and the humble praise so as to raise up Maat to the Great God, lord of heaven" (Schenkel, 1965:142).

But speech is not simply the voicing of words, it is tied to the concept of truth, life, power and self-master. Like other African cultures, Kemetic culture sees the word as power (Bilolo, 1988). In Yoruba culture, speech that is spiritually and morally grounded has *ase*-creative power. Drewal and Drewal (1990:5-6) note that "utterances as expressions of the spiritual inner self of an individual possess *ase*, the power to bring things into actual existence." This, of course, approximates Hu and Sia, creative powers discussed above in chapter V on ontology. In fact, like Hu it is defined on one level as "power, authority and command" (Abraham, 1958:71). Again, it is important to note that this power Hu, authoritative utterance, informed by Sia is creative and life-giving in Kemetic thought. Therefore in chapter 17 of Coming Forth, one says, "I live on truth. I exist through it. I live by what I say."

Finally, the control of speech is seen as a central means of self-mastery. In fact, control of speech (*gr*) can be translated as self-mastery as discussed above. Certainly, one of the main thrusts in Maatian ethics as evidenced by both the Declarations of Innocence and the Virtues is to achieve self-mastery. Zahan (1979:110) has observed that in terms of ethics, "the African valorizes above all the mastery of self, making it, in fact, the foundation of his conduct." He goes on to say that "this 'virtue' possesses an essential preliminary which is also the basis of African thought and philosophy." This preliminary is self-knowledge. For "it is through the knowledge of self that the human being arrives at mastery of self; self-knowledge is, as it were, the motive force behind the mastery of self, this is the foundation of ethics." Moreover, key to this self-mastery is the self-mastery of speech. As Zahan (1979:112) argues, "among all the reflexes capable of undermining the mastery of self, there is one towards which the African is particularly sensitized, and that is speech." In fact, he says, "the African places the true basis for the human being's dominion over his acts and conduct in the power and control over his speech."

Thus, Zahan asserts that silence becomes a central moral virtue, "constituting at once (the) beginning and end" of other moral values. He maintains, "It is the supreme virtue, as it subsumes integrity, courage, the power of the

soul, prudence, modesty and temperance." This is evidenced in Bambara culture in which silence is a cardinal virtue. In homage to silence and the benefits it brings they say:

> If speech constructs the town, silence builds the world. Silence adorned the world, speech made it hum. Speech dispersed the world, silence reassembles it. Speech destroys the town, silence makes its foundation. Silence hides man's manner of being from man, speech unveils it. One does not know what the silent man thinks, but one knows the thought of the chatterer. The secret belongs to him who keeps quiet. Silence marked the boundaries of the paths, speech confused them. Silence pondered. Speech did not want to think. Silence soothes the _dya_ (a person's spiritual double similar to the ka in ancient Egyptian anthropology), speech frightens it. Silence gave birth to the serious, speech to diversion. Any serious thing is made in silence, but any useless thing is made in turmoil. Marriage is made in silence, 'free' love is amusement in noise. If speech burned your mouth, silence will heal you. Silence is the antidote for all, speech opens the door to all evil. (Zahan, 1979: 117-118)

Here then as in Kemetic culture and other African cultures, useless talk is highly disdained. For it is what the Dogon call "Speech without path and without seeds" (Griaule, 1965: 374). Closely connected with the virtue of silence is the virtue of patience. Thus one has the proverb, the "patient man has peace" and he is "refreshing" like water (Griaule, 1965:374-375). This reminds us of Khun-Anup's advice "Be patient that you may learn Maat" (B1,209-210).

These themes of responsible male-female relations appear throughout the Sebait.

8.1.4 Social Justice and the Vulnerable

The DOI also stress social justice as a core moral concern and claim. This includes prohibitions against stealing (B 2), especially food (B 15) and property in general (B 2), encroaching on other's fields (A 24), lessening the acre (23), discrimination (B 40), tampering with the scales (A 25 and 26), being fraudulent (B 7), coveting others property (B 41) and turning a blind eye to (winking at) injustice (B26). There is inherent in Maatian ethics a call for shared social wealth both in terms of just dealing, neighborly generosity and special obligations to the most vulnerable. This call for justice is a constant theme in the DOI, the DOV and the Sebait. The locus classicus for this, as noted above, is in the oldest social justice text in the world, the Book of Khun-Anup. Here, Khun-Anup interprets Maat as speaking truth and doing justice and reminds his readers that justice is "a principle established by the word of God" and that "justice is mighty, great and endures. Its worth has been found and it leads one to worthiness" (309-310, 320-322). The treatise is especially a plea for justice for the poor and vulnerable in which Khun-Anup says to the High Steward Rensi, "Do not rob a poor person of his goods, one whom you know is weak. For the breath of the poor is his property and he who seizes them stops up his nose" (B 231-235).

But although Khun-Anup clearly argues for the poor and vulnerable, it is an argument within a larger defense of justice itself. For he contends not only that a poor person's property is breath to him, but most important is that "doing justice (itself) is breath to the nose" (B1, 146). Moreover, he states "the true balancing of the earth lies in doing justice" (B1,158-159). And he asserts it must be a justice based on seeing and hearing, i.e., moral sensitivity to the needy. Thus, he says to Rensi, that to be just he must "let the eyes see and the heart/mind take notice" (B1,213). It is this moral sensitivity expressed in recognizing and responding adequately to situations of need that is emphasized in the DOI by the moral claims of having "not winked at injustice" (B 26) and having "not been deaf to truth" (B 24). Seeing clearly, then, and hearing in the sense of listening to and responding to the demands of justice are at the heart of Maatian moral practice. And this is made even more urgent in relationship to the most vulnerable among us.

In the context of concern for the demands of social justice, one encounters discourse on the sharing of wealth. This, in turn, is discussed in terms of both general neighborly generosity and specific material assistance to the vulnerable. As might be anticipated, all assistance to the vulnerable is not economic, but the sharing of wealth is

certainly a principal means by which one shows appropriate concern for the vulnerable.

Generosity to neighbors as an expression of social justice through wealth-sharing is treated as fundamental throughout Kemetic history. It is a conception which evolves as a Maatian value from both the moral understanding of the requirements of moral community and obligations attached to the divine gift of wealth. This conception of wealth as a divine gift is encountered in the Sebait of Ptahhotep which says: "sustain your friends with what you have. For it happens to you by the grace of God." Moreover, Ptahhotep counsels the avoidance of selfishness, noting that it is in helping others that one insures help for oneself. Therefore, he says:

> Be generous as long as you live. What goes in the storehouse does not return. It is food which is to be shared (and is not), which is coveted. One whose stomach is empty is an accuser and he who is deprived becomes an opponent. Do not let such a one be your neighbor. Kindness is a person's memorial. (481-488)

Likewise, greed is condemned as "a grievous sickness" without adequate cure or treatment. It is the source of family disputes and division, "a bundle of all kinds of evil and a bag of vices of every kind" (298-311). It is here that Ptahhotep concludes with the classic statement advising that "Established is the person whose standard is justice, who walks according to its ways. He will make a will by it. But the greedy will not have a grace" (312-315). This same

advice is repeated in the next lines which counsel against greediness toward family members. It says, "do not be greedy in the division (of wealth). Do not covet more than your share" (316-317). For sharing cultivates amity while greed undermines family and community.

The New Kingdom text of Ani reaffirms this emphasis on generosity as a virtue which builds and sustains community. Ani teaches that generosity is above all a reciprocal good. He says "small things given return greater and what is (replaced) brings abundance" (V, 12). And in a long passage he provides one of the most important statements on generosity as a neighborly obligation and a basis of reciprocal support. He states:

> Do not eat bread while another stands by without extending your hand to him. As for food it will be known for eternity. It is the person who does not remain. One person may be rich and another poor, but food remains for one (who shares it). As for one who was rich last year, he may be a vagrant this year. Therefore, do not be greedy to fill your belly (without regard for others). For you do not know what your end will be like. If you become needy, another may do good to you. The watercourse of last year has passed away, (but) another is here this year. Great waters have become dry land, and seashores become as ocean depths. Thus, a person does not have a single way. He responds to the Lord of Life. (VIII, 3-10)

Thus, Ani stresses constant consideration of and sharing with others. He poses this practice as a contribution to building a moral community which is a bulwark against the vicissitudes of life, a security of sustenance and support which the ephemerality of wealth cannot provide.

In the Late Period, the Sebait of Phebhor and Ankhsheshonqi continue this emphasis on generosity as a community-constituting and community-sustaining moral practice. Phebhor reaffirms Ptahhotep's early conception of wealth as a gift of God to be used to do good for others. He says, "God allows one to acquire wealth in return for doing good" (16,12). Moreover, he states that "wealth goes to those who give food to others by means of it" (15,22). Therefore, "if you acquire property, give a portion to God by giving a portion to the poor" (16,4). Finally, he says, "Those who love their neighbors will find a family around them (16.8). And Ankhsheshonqi teaches, "let your generosity reach one who needs it. Do not be stingy, for wealth is no real security" (12, 17-18). In fact, he says "there is no good deed, except the good done for one who needs it" (15,6). Finally, he says "Do not say 'I have this wealth I will not serve God nor will I serve people. For wealth comes to an end. Serving God is what creates (it)" (18, 16-17). Thus, generosity is posed as a key Maatian virtue which builds and sustains community, reaffirms the value of reciprocity and honors the obligation to do good with wealth which is conceived as essentially a gift of God, given for this very purpose.

This doing of good as Ankhsheshonqi maintained, must be done above all for those who needed it. Thus, even though one shares wealth with one's family and neighbors often of

similar means, it is clearly the most vulnerable members of society with whom one is most obligated to share. It is within this understanding that Phebhor says that a gift to the poor is in fact a gift to God. The paradigmatic expression of concern for the vulnerable is the moral claim of having "given food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one." This is found in the affirmation of Maat-doing in the paragraph following the actual Declarations of Innocence in Chapter 125 of Coming Forth. Both this emphasis on care and responsibility toward the vulnerable and this classic expression of it is well attested beginning in the Old Kingdom and lasting throughout the Late Period of Kemetic history as the texts cited in Chapters III and IV show. Categories of vulnerable persons deserving special care and responsibility are numerous and indicative of constantly developing moral concerns for the vulnerable and increasingly different ways to express them.

The DOI cite several categories of vulnerable persons: the orphan (A 8); the servant (as a less powerful person) (A 10); and children (A 27). These are augmented, as noted above, by the declaration of virtue which follows the DOI and which includes the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and the boatless. Both of these lists in no way exhaust the categories of vulnerability in Maatian literature and thus, are meant to focus on the condition of vulnerability as a

central moral concern rather than be exhaustive. The Sebait and DOV clearly extend this list producing an expansive area of concern for the vulnerable. Certainly, the have-nots represented by the poor and the widow and orphan and the weak or less-powerful are early and consistent concerns in Maatian literature.

In Edel's (1981:77ff) reconstruction of a standard text in his <u>Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches</u>, we find an excellent expression of these moral concerns during this period. In the text, Neferseshem Ptah at Saqqara lists as the good he has done for the people that he: " . . .saved the weak from one stronger than he as best I could . . .gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and landed one who was stranded, buried him who lacked a son . . .made a boat for the boatless and supported the orphan." These moral themes are reaffirmed and expanded in the First Intermediate Period. Khety says in addition to giving food and clothes to the needy that he "listened to the plea of the widow and gave a home to the orphan" (Edel, 1984:96ff).

In addition to widows as categories of vulnerable people deserving special moral concern, in this period, women as potential victims in vulnerable situations are also cited. Thus, Henku says that he did not take advantage of his position and seize peoples' daughters for sexual purposes (Urk. I:77.4-5). And Iti reaffirms the importance of this moral discipline in the context of famine suggesting

that he did not use this situation of vulnerability to "seize a person's daughter" or his property (Schenkel, 1988:no.57.5). This moral claim is repeated by Ameni in the Middle Kingdom who says "*nn s3t n nḏs shbt.n.i*--There was no daughter of a citizen whom I misused" (Urk. VII:16.1). Although we have cited the moral responsibility to bury the aged, we find an assertion of the need to be "a son to the aged" indicating a wider range of responsibility to the aged in the moral presentation of Djehuty-nakht-ankh (Anthes, 1928:29.11-12). In addition, he says he is "a protector of the poor in every place."

In the Middle Kingdom, the moral concern for the vulnerable is continues to be reaffirmed and expanded. Intef, son of Sent, defines his concern for the vulnerable essentially in terms of being "one who calms the weeper with good words . . ." and caring for the poor and have-not. He describes himself as one who is "open-handed, an owner of food who does not hide his face . . .a friend of the poor, one well-disposed to the have-not; . . .one who feeds the hungry in need and who is open-handed to the pauper" (HT II: pl.23.12ff). Ameni is more expansive saying,

> There was no citizen's daughter whom I misused. There was no widow whom I oppressed. There was no peasant who I drove back. There was no herdsman whom I repelled, there was no overseer or workers whose people I seized for taxes and there was no hungry in my time . . . . I gave to the widow like to her who had a husband. I did not distinguish the great from the small in all that I gave." (Urk. VII:16.1-6, 12-13)

And the Hatnub texts reaffirm concern for the weak, widow and orphan and while also stressing, as did Ameni, the need to do justice to the humble and the great without distinction. Thus, the prince Djehuti-Nakht and the nomarch Kay both say they sustained their cities and citizens without distinguishing between the humble and the great (Anthes, 1928:52.23,5-6; 54.24,9-10).

The New Kingdom moral texts are even more expansive in their stress on care and responsibility for the vulnerable. Definitive of this emphasis is the moral claims posed by Intef, quoted above, who in defining his moral personality and deeds says that he was "a servant of the needy, father of the poor, guide to the orphan, mother of the timid, shelter for the battered, helper of the sick, husband of the widow, refuge for the orphan and a place of peace for the weeping" (Urk. IV:970-972). In addition to the additional categories of care and responsibility here, the poetic way of expressing them is also notable. The Sebait of Amenomope reaffirms concern for the poor, instructing that one should "not covet a poor person's goods nor hunger for his bread" (XIV, 5-6). Moreover, he says, "if you find a large debt against a poor person, divide it into three parts, forgive two and let one stand. You will find this a path of life. And after sleeping, when you wake in the morning, you will find it against like good news" (XVI, 5-10). For he concludes, "Better is praise with the love of the people

than wealth in the storehouse" (XVI, 11). Moreover, Amenomope is concerned with giving justice to "one in rags" and "the weak," and not showing preference to the rich and powerful saying one who "saves the poor from his oppressor" resembles God (XXI, 1-8).

Amenomope also voices concern for the widow instructing that one should not attack the widow when you find her gleaning leftovers in the fields, or deny the stranger aid. For he concludes, "God prefers one who respects the poor more than one who reveres the rich" (XXVI, 9-14). Finally, Amenomope adds to the categories of vulnerability, the elder and the physically and mentally disadvantaged. Thus, he says in one passage, "beware of robbing the afflicted or attaching the feeble. And do not stretch out your hand to touch an old man . . ." (IV, 4-6). And in another passage, he extends the area of moral concern for the vulnerable by adding the blind, the dwarf, the lame and the mentally disadvantaged. He says, then:

> Do not laugh at the blind nor mock a dwarf, nor interfere with the plans of the lame. Do not harass one who is in the hands of God nor be angry with him if he errs.

The phrase "one who is in the hands of God" refers here to the mentally disadvantaged person and reveals an early empathy and concern for such a person. The attention to the aged in Amenomope is one of both respect and moral concern. The above cited reference points to the latter but there are other instructions on proper deference to the aged because

of age and status as distinct from age and infirmity. This latter concern is the vulnerability addressed in Djehuti-Nakht-Ankh's assertion "I was a son to the aged" (Anthes, 1928: 29.12,11) and in Rekhmira's statement, "I made the old man secure, giving (him my staff) and causing the old woman to say 'It is a good deed'" (Urk. IV.1078.11-13).

These moral claims and concerns are continued in the Late Period in both standard and expansive ways. This is evident in the moral self-presentation of the priest Harwa who defines himself as: "a refuge for the poor; a float for the drowning; a ladder for one who is (trapped) in the pit; one who speaks for the wretched; who assists the unfortunate and who helps the oppressed by his good deeds" (Gunn, 1934: pl.B, 8-11). He goes on to say also that he was "one who gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, who removed pain and suppressed wrongdoing, who buried the revered ones, supported the aged, removed the need of the have-nots" and was "a shade for the child, a helper for the widow and one who gave rank even to an infant" (pl.C, 6-8). Harwa ends his declaration of virtue towards the vulnerable by stating that he is one who is "well-disposed to the great and the small, who gives advice to the timid in trouble when his witnesses stand up to accuse, one open-handed who nourished all and one who provided the have not with what he lacked" (pl.D, 1-3). Thus, Harwa's moral self-presentation in its

inclusiveness and beauty represents the culmination of the development of the Maatian concern for the vulnerable.

Social justice, then, stands at the heart of what it means to follow Maat and create a Maatian moral community. And social justice begins with respecting the human person, and sharing social wealth with neighbors and especially with the most vulnerable. However, the ultimate ethical challenge of Maat, as is posed now in contemporary Maatian philosophy is not simply to give to the poor, but to end poverty itself. Therefore, active moral sensitivity to the poor and vulnerable and an obligation to aid them are beginning steps, and this is what the ancient texts teach. Maatian ethics, then, stands on the side of the poor and vulnerable and implicit in this stand is the concept that the quality of life and justice in any society is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable members.

8.1.5 The Moral Considerability of the Stranger

Certainly, another important category of persons for whom one is instructed to care in Maatian ethics is the stranger. The stranger, as a foreigner or simply as one unknown, becomes a special focus of care because he/she lacks the relational advantages of those familiar and thus does not have the moral considerability one intuitively senses is due to family, friends and neighbors. Often because of relational disadvantages, the stranger may be poor, suspect, subject to hostility, lack adequate support

or suffer related vulnerabilities. Thus, the need evolves for moral instruction concerning them which is not covered under concerns for familiars, i.e, family, friends and neighbors. In Kemetic texts, the view of strangers is both complex and varied. There are at least three basic ways one can examine this view: 1) the Kemetic theo-political self-conception in relation to the Divine and their resultant conception of other nations based on this; 2) the Kemetic cultural conception of individual strangers as distinct from stranger nations; and 3) the general Kemetic moral conception of strangers as fellow humans and as subjects of care and responsibility.

The Kemetic self-conception and their resultant view of foreign nations is clearly tied to their conception of Maat and to the role of Kemet's ruler and people in upholding it in the world. Texts pose Egypt and its ruler as special in the sight of God. Like Israel's later concept of "chosen people," Kemet considers itself divinely established, cared for and unique. Kemet and its ruler are also bound to God by mutual commitment rooted in the concept and practice of Maat. They are to do Maat and God will protect, exalt and cause them to flourish as the texts below of Merenptah and Ramesses assert. Thus, Merenptah's Triumphant Praise Poem says:

> As for Kemet, it is said that since the time of the divinities, she is the unique daughter of Ra. And his son is on the throne of Shu (i.e., of Egypt). None who attacks her will succeed. The

> eye of every divinity is after her (Kemet's) attacker and it will put an end to all her enemies. (Spiegelberg, 1896:4.12-13)

Actually, the phrase "*šrit w't p3 R',*" i.e., "the unique Daughter of Ra" can also mean "the only Daughter of Ra." But in any and all of its meanings--only, unique, single, one--w' here is used to define ancient Egypt as having a special and singular status in relation to God in distinction from all the other nations of the earth. Kemet, then, is posed in other texts as the navel of the world, the primordial mound (*ḳ3*) from which the Creator creates the world. It is in this context that the Kemetic temple "was regarded as an image of this primeval mound and thus, as the centre and nucleus of the earth" (Morenz, 1984:43). Moreover, as Morenz (1984:45) also notes, later Greek writers reaffirm this conception of Kemet's centeredness and specialness in the world by referring to it as "the centre of the [inhabited] earth," "'the very holy land' located at the centre of the earth" and finally, as "the temple of the entire world."

Likewise, the king and queen, as discussed above, are the son and daughter of God who do his will, Maat, who speak truth, do justice and hold back and suppress the forces of isfet in the world. They uphold Maat in society and the world and therefore are special, unique and indeed the chosen of God--*stp in R'*, as the names of Queen Tawesret (19th Dynasty) and some other rulers of the 19th, 20th and

21st dynasties reaffirm (James, 1979:271). Acting within this chosen status of Kemet and its ruler, Ramesses III prays to Amen Ra saying

> May you cause it to be known in every low country and high country that you are the power of the king (of Egypt), your son, against every low country and every high country. You grant victory to the land of Kemet, your special land (*t3 w'ty*) without the hand of a soldier or any man (being needed), only your great strength which ensures salvation . . . . (Helck, 1958:pl. III, II.10-11)

The parallel view of Kemet as the hold land and as a chosen land with a chosen ruler who does Maat is that other countries are represented in many texts as the un-Maatian world, the unordered and are thus posed as a threat to Kemet and in contradiction to Maat (Loprieno, 1988:22-34). It is in this context that Hatshepsut asserts that the Hyksos "ruled without Ra" (Urk. IV:390.9) and Ramesses II describes his Hittite enemies at the Battle of Kadesh as "wretches ignorant of God" (KRI II:35.97). Also as noted above, the Greeks are called "dogs" and Alexander "the big dog" in the Demotic Chronicle (VI, 21) suggesting the Kemetic conception of them as an expression of Seth, a force of isfet--evil and disorder, who appears to be portrayed as a member of the canine family (Griffiths, 1991:283). Moreover, the Nubians, Asiatics and Libyans are repeatedly called "*ḫsy*" which may mean "miserable," "wretched," "vile" or simply "defeated," as Lorton (1973) argues. In any case, the term is clearly

pejorative and represents a hostile posture toward those considered enemies of Kemet and Maat.

Loprieno (1988) has usefully divided the Kemetic view of the foreign stranger (Auslander) into concepts of Topos and Mimesis. The Auslander-Topos refers to an idealized portrait of the world which serves rhetorical and ideological ends as distinct from literal ones. In this view, presented above, strangers are stereotyped and placed in the context of the un-Maatian world as distinct from the Maatian one. On the other hand, the Auslander-Mimesis is a more realistic conception which though still rooted in cultural conceptions, allows for treatment of foreigners as individuals and recognition of their humanity and ability to act in positive ways, especially if they are acculturated in Kemetic culture. In this regard, it is important to note that as Tefnin (1986) and O'Connor (1982:194ff) contend, this attitude was always a culture one, never a racial one. Thus as Loprieno (1988:23) states, we are dealing here with the concepts of "Unkultur" and "Kultur," with isfet and Maat being defining characteristics of each respectively. Likewise, other distinctions between peoples were in national terms not racial ones in spite of early Egyptological assumptions that they had discovered racial discourse in this or that text (Tefnin, 1986:47).

It is however, the moral conception of the stranger that stands as an important contribution to the Maatian

ideal in its most universalistic conception which evolves in the New Kingdom. In the Amarna period, in the Great Hymn to God of Akhenaton, God is "Lord of all Lands," who sets a person in his or her place and supplies his or her needs (Sandman, 1938:93-96). And although the texts note God gives them different languages, characters and skin colors, this diversity is described without claims of Kemetic superiority. Moreover, the texts reaffirm this humanistic view by stating that God has made the Nile on earth for Kemet, but a Nile in heaven, i.e., the rains, for all lands. This does not mark the end of conceptions of specialness as 19th Dynasty texts of Merenptah and Ramesses, cited above, affirm. But it does show a parallel conception establishing itself and giving expansiveness to concepts of the human person. As Daumas (1962:181) states, in this and related texts, "it is clear that ancient Egypt arrived at a conception of universal humanity." For "all men whatever their language, or skin color are creatures of the same benevolent God who provides them the means to live." He is correct to conclude that "these conceptions imply that humans have duties toward one another." and it is in this context that not only the familiar but also the stranger deserves moral consideration.

It is this equal moral consideration of the familiar and the stranger that first appears as a Maatian ideal in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, in the

expression of having done good to "one known and unknown without distinction." Thus, Djehuti-Nakht-Ankh of the Middle Kingdom says, "*ir.n(.i) ḥsst n rmṯ nb rḫw mi ḫmw n sṯn.i*--I did what was praiseworthy for all the people, known and unknown without distinction" (Anthes, 1928:28.12,7-8), Neferyu, in the First Intermediate Period, had assumed this same moral posture saying, "I gave things to one I knew like one I did not know" (Hayes, 1990I:fig.82). And this claim is repeated by Rediu Khnum in the Middle Kingdom who says, "I nourished one I did not know like one I did know so that my name might be good in the mouth of those on earth" (Lange-Schäfer, 1908 II:166.15-16).

In the New Kingdom, the king, in his Instructions to the Prime Minister, tells the prime minister that justice must be dispensed without distinction of person. Thus, he says, "You shall regard one you know like one you don't know" in administering justice (Urk. IV:1095.5). Also in his Sebait, Amenomope teaches against denying strangers assistance in order to give extra to your family members. He says, "Do not refuse your oil jar to a stranger (*ḏrḏri*) in order to double it for your relatives. God loves one who honors the poor more than one who reveres the rich" (XXVI, 11-14). The stranger is posed here as one needy and the importance of answering his need is reaffirmed by stressing God's implicit preference for the poor and his explicit preference for those who honor them. Its importance is also

made clear by insisting on a balance on what one gives familiars so that one won't deprive the stranger in the process.

Finally, in the Late Period, Wennofer lists as one of his good deeds for the needy that he welcomed the stranger. He says, "I was a good shelter for the needy, one on whom everyone could lean. I was one (who welcomed) the stranger and was useful advisor and an excellent guide" (Brugsch, 1883-91 IV:741.2). I am following Lichtheim (AEL III:55) in translating the phrase "*'ḳ ḫ3*" as "welcomed." The Worterbuch does not list the word *h3* with the "way" determinative used here. But surely the sense here is that Wennofer is claiming a positive act toward the stranger. And "*'kh3*" thus seems to be an idiomatic way of making the moral claim that he "welcomed" the stranger. This rendering is bolstered by the fact that it is preceded by the claim of being "one on whom all could lean" and the following claim that he was "a useful advisor and an excellent guide." Thus, the passages taken together speak to a receptive and helpful approach to strangers as well as persons in general.

In the Late Period Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi moral concern for the stranger is also addressed. In Ankhsheshonqi, the instruction is that one should not hide from the stranger, for one does not know what good he will bring. He says: "Do not hide from a stranger who comes from outside. If there is nothing in your hand there may be something in

his" (16.19-20). Thus, the stranger is not to be shunned as the potential bringer of the negative, but rather received as the potential bringer of good. Phebhor does not address the moral concern for the stranger and instead speaks to what he considers the problems of abandoning one's town and becoming a stranger in another. In fact, he cites the vulnerabilities of a stranger which other moral texts seek to address. Here the point is stressed that being a member of one's own community is preferable to being a stranger in another. But it in no way undermines the long history of teachings which stress care and service for those "known and unknown without distinction."

8.1.6 The Moral Status of Women

The Declarations of Innocence, as a central moral document mentions women explicitly as a category only in the disavowal of adultery (B19) found in declarations by men. Likewise, men as a category are mentioned explicitly only in the same declaration by women. This is due to the fact that there is in the Maatian tradition no separate moral obligations or spiritual paths for men and women. And thus the DOI changes language for women or men only in the one stipulation where gender or rather sexual difference requires a different wording. Still, the question of women's moral status within the Maatian tradition is an important one, both in terms of its ancient uniqueness and its value as a model and meaningful focus of discussion in

modern discourse around womanist and feminist concerns for moral and spiritual traditions which give a balanced, meaningful and rightful place to women's experience, insight and contributions (Williams, 1993; Hudson-Weems, 1993; Fiorenza, 1992; Grant, 1989; Cannon, 1988; Thiam, 1986). Thus, critical examination of this question here is both proper and compelling.

The general status of women in ancient societies, especially European and Western Asian, has become in recent years a major focus of ongoing research (Archer, 1994; Lesko, 1989; Clark, 1989; Cameron and Kuhrt, 1983; Pomeroy, 1975). Within this general thrust, an important body of literature on women in ancient Egypt has emerged also (Van Sertima, 1985; Ward, 1986; Lesko, 1987; Watterson, 1991). Even in the earliest research in this area, it has been a general agreement that the overall status of Kemetic women was higher than women of contemporary neighboring European and Western Asian cultures. Neither Babylonia (Driver and Miles, 1952-1955) nor Greece (Tichner, 1922; Taubenschlag, 1938, 1955; Pomeroy, 1975) nor Rome (Gardiner, 1986; Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982; Balsdon, 1962) nor even ancient Israel (Meyers, 1988; Brenner, 1985, Otwell, 1977) can compare to the rights granted to and status held by the women of ancient Egypt.

Although the literature has not dealt directly with the moral status of ancient Egyptian women, its treatment of

issues of rights, equality and the quality of social relations carry within it indicators of the moral considerability of women and thus, it is useful. For I mean here by the term moral status the level of considerability given persons within a system of concepts and standards of right and wrong (Goodpaster, 1978; Kleinig, 1991:14-18). This status in its affirmative sense would mean for persons an entitlement to have others recognize and respect them as persons in deliberations and actions related to them. Likewise, a negative sense of moral status would lack such recognition and respect in deliberation and action. Thus, in determining the moral status of women of ancient Egypt, we will want to look for evidence of recognition and respect for them in critical areas of Kemetic thought and practice. This will include religious and moral conceptions of them, legal conceptions and rights and social relations which affirm that they are taken seriously and their interests are appropriately weighed and respected.

The point of departure for determining both the source and character of women's moral status in ancient Egypt is its religion or in other words, its theology and ethics. For as argued above, "the cardinal features of (Kemetic) culture and society were determined by the existence and power of its all pervading religious beliefs" (Morenz, 1984:6). The question then becomes what is the religious or rather Maatian conception of women? Moreover, is it sub-

stantively different than the conception of man? And are sexual differences translated into social-constructed gender differences which make women's personhood derivative rather than inherent and original? The answer to these and related questions will, of necessity, reveal the level of considerability given women and therefore, undergird or undermine her moral status.

One of the essential ways of understanding the moral status and considerability of women in ancient Egypt, then, is to examine its theology and to see if the very concept of God affirms or denies the equal moral status of women. For our sense of God affects our sense of the order and rightness of things and in Kemet, as elsewhere, religious symbolism becomes models for human thought and practice and the social order constructed out of this. Thus, the exclusive maleness of God would tend to privilege maleness as Jewish and Christian feminists have noted (Williams, 1993; Isasi-Diaz, 1993; Chung, 1990; Plaskow, 1990; Grant, 1989; Isasi-Diaz and Tarango, 1988; Russell, 1985; Fiorenza, 1984; Ruether, 1983; Daly, 1973). And a balanced image of God which contains both female and male principles and yet is transcendent of both would tend to support more equal conceptions of and relations between male and female.

In fact, Kemetic theology contains such conceptions which, in an important way, is contributive to the more equal conceptions of and relations between male and female.

This balanced imagery and conceptualization appear most definitively in the theology of creation. In this theology, the Creator in his name of Atum contains both female and male principles as an expression of his name and essence--*completeness*. It is merely convention to say "he" when speaking of the Creator, for in reality s/he is neither male nor female, neither dual nor androgynous. Rather s/he is an expression of "the fullness and completeness in which the masculine and the feminine principles (are) combined into one unity in order to express the singleness and wholeness of the creative force" (Tobin, 1989:41). It is this conception of singleness which contains both male and female principles and yet is not either and of completeness which is, of necessity, defined by constitutive elements of male and female that offers the theological ground of equality and necessity of male and female principle in the realms of the divine, natural and social (Obenga, 1992:166-170).

This requirement of both male and female for wholeness and completeness is reaffirmed both in the process of creation and the description of the Creator as both mother and father who gives birth (*msi*) and begets (*wtt*) at the same time. Thus, the Creator, in his begetting as a male function and her giving birth as a female function, reproduces at the very beginning both the divine male and female principles, Shu and Tefnut. In this regard, the Creator says in CT 132 (II.153-154), "I am he who made (*ir*) Shu and

gave birth (*msi*) to Tefnut." And then s/he repeats the pattern making himself, herself into millions. Therefore, the divine female and male principles of Nut and Geb, Isis and Osiris, Nephthys and Seth are created equally and the same time. In this understanding, Amun Ra is called "one who gave birth to all that exists, the father of fathers, the mother of mothers (*it itw mwt mwwt*)" (pLeiden I, 350:V.2-4). Reaffirming this inclusive singleness and completeness, the Creator says, "I am this masculine one (*pn*) and this feminine one (*tn*) (CT 136,II.161).

Similar conceptions of the Creator as male and female occur with Menhyt and Neith, who contain both female and male principles, and function as the Creator in her other names (Sauneron, 1968:135ff.no.152 and 252; El-Sayed, 1982). Likewise, definitive of the interchangeability and fluidity of defining male and female features of the Divine is the evolution of the attributes and functions of Isis. In a collection of hymns to her at her temple at Philae, Isis demonstrates clearly the centrality and equality of the female principle in Kemetic theology (Zabkar, 1988). She assumes a variety of roles considered in other traditions strictly male or female, but in Kemetic theology are simply an expression of the inclusiveness and completeness of the Divine.

She is defined as mother of the divinities and of humanity, protector and resurrector of Osiris, mother and

protector of the king and warrior "who is more effective than a million soldiers" (Zabkar, 1988:61). But most striking and instructive is her definition as the Creator, herself. And although similar conceptions exist in other African cultures (Mbiti, 1970), this is clearly not the norm in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The text defines Isis in the following terms:

> *nts nb(t) pt, t3, dw3t*
> *Hr sḫpr sn n ḳm3(t) n ib.s*
> *m ir(.t.n) ʿwẏ.s* (Zabkar, 1988:51.no.IV)

> She is mistress of Heaven, earth and
> the Otherworld
> Having brought them into being by what
> her heart/mind conceived
> And her hands created.

There are several instructive aspects of this text. First, this description of the Creator, in her name of Isis, draws on a standard description of Creator as expressed in the attributes assigned to the Creator in his name, Ptah. This description is found in the Shabaka Text (Junker, 1940) and the Berlin Hymn of Ptah (Wolf, 1929). It is in essence a conceptual portrait of creation through creative intelligence as distinct from modalities of "begetting" and "giving birth" which can be identified as male and female modalities of creation respectively. That Isis is described as Creator in these terms, reaffirms the lack of gender boundaries in Kemetic theology which would conceptually prevent the female principle of divinity from expressing itself in ways which are thought in other traditions to be exclusively or

essentially male. It is, in fact, this same Isis of whom it is said in her Great Hymn, "You make the power of women equal to that of men" (pOxyrhynchus, 1380,II.214-216).

Finally, it is important to repeat that what one has here is not an androgynous portrait of God. Rather, it is a concept of inclusiveness and completeness rooted in and reflective of male and female principles and yet transcendent of them both. In such a concept, completeness is impossible and inconceivable without female and male, so that even in the expression of one, the other is there and constitutive of the singularity. Thus, one can call God "he" without denying the value and presence of the feminine, and one can call God "she" without denying the value or presence of the masculine. It is human choice to say "he" or "she," but God, in Kemetic theology, is both each and more than both. And in his or her many names God appears as each while embodying both.

A second central question in this theological analysis of the moral status of women is the status of women in the creation process and in Maatian anthropology. That is to say, are women in any way derivative, secondary or less in the image of God? In other words, is Maatian anthropology divided into two spheres--male and female--or is it a single anthropology for both? Again, there is no division between female and male in Maatian anthropology. Unlike in Genesis: 2.33, there is no separate and derivative origin of woman,

no "rib theory" which marks an initial marginalized conception and resultant status for women as the subordinate other (Plaskow, 1990; Heschel, 1983; Berkovits, 1978).

The *snn nṯr* (imago dei) concept in the Sebait of Kheti for Merikara clearly includes woman and man as evidenced by the use of the male and female determinatives for *rmṯ* (human) (Kheti, 131). It is also reaffirmed in the related reference to humans as God's *msw.f* (his children), a category which also uses the male and female determinatives to express inclusiveness (Kheti, 132). Moreover, the same is true of the Djedi narrative which I discussed above as a central source of the concept of human dignity (pBerlin 3033:8,16-17). Here Djedi speaks against taking human life and experiments on humans and in defense of human life and human dignity, also using the word *rmṯ* (human being) with male and female determinatives. Finally, in the Sebait of Ani, Khonsuhotep describes the morally sensitive and knowing person as the image or similar (*snnw*) of God, using the male and female determinative.

The word *snnw* may mean the second, fellow, equal or like or image (Lesko, 1987:59) and is, in any case, used here to suggest a Godlikeness, Gottähnlichkeit. Thus, men and women are defined as the images of God, and again here, this image is one of moral sensitivity or responsiveness and intellectual capacity that yield spiritual similarity (Ockinga, 1984:87-88). This contrasts with a tendency in

Judaism, as described by Adler (1978:351) and others, to "identify women with gashmiut (physicality) and men with ruchniut (spirituality). Likewise, it contrasts with the pseudo-intellectual arguments of female inferior otherness such as those in Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Metaphysics, as well as the so-called Pythagorean Table of Opposites which informed Plato's and Aristotle's mismeasurement of woman (Lovibund, 1994).

As there is no religious doctrinal division between man and woman, such as the spiritual and the physical with corresponding conceptions of worth and status, there is no exemption from the obligations to do Maat and abstain from isfet for man or woman. Thus, the Declarations of Innocence are obligations to abstain from isfet and do Maat for both women and men. And although there is a male-specific declaration of innocence (B19) in the BCF texts of males, the same holds true for the Book of Coming Forth texts of females. The declaration for men is "I have not copulated with (another's) wife (*ḥmt-ṯ3* or *ḥmt*) and the declaration for women, as expressed in the Papyrus of Anhai, is "I have not copulated with (another's) husband (*ṯ3y*) (Rossiter, 1979:106). Therefore, adultery is not unequally defined as sleeping with another man's wife only, but also as not sleeping with another woman's husband.

Again, not only are both man and woman obligated to disavow, abstain from, and resist isfet or evil, they must

also do Maat in the positive sense. Woman and man must speak truth, do justice and walk in the way of rightness. In their autobiographies and autobiographical references, women from the Old Kingdom throughout Kemetic history make the same claims of Maat-doing as men. Although women's autobiographies are less numerous than men's and in earlier periods shorter, there is no significant difference in the positive duties which they felt morally obligated to perform. Thus, in her autobiographical text written during the late Old Kingdom, the king's acquaintance, Hemi defines herself as a person of virtue, one who is morally and socially worthy (*im3ḫyt*) (Fischer, 1988:fig.17). She says, "I am an excellent spirit. I have not done evil to them (the people). I have given food to the hungry and clothes to the naked. I am one praised by her husband. I have travelled on the good ways of God's domain as a worthy one of the Great God." She, therefore, is concerned with worthiness before God and community and lists not doing evil and showing concern and care for the vulnerable as a defining moral practice which is standard in Maatian declarations of virtue.

The texts of Naga-ed-Der of the First Intermediate Period yield a sample of women's self-expression in community during this time (Dunham, 1937). They identify themselves often as priestesses and prophetesses of Hathor, as one honored before the Great God, unique royal jewel,

praised and beloved by their parents and siblings and express wishes to reach the afterlife worthy before God. Thus, the prophetess Intites says of herself:

> May she join the earth and cross
> the heavens
> May she be led by the Great God to
> (his) pure places
> (For she is) one worthy before (the
> Great God)
> One praised of her father, and beloved
> of her mother
> One whom her brothers and sisters love.
> (Dunham, 1937:38)

Again, these wishes for the afterlife and a declaration of worthiness are standard texts and mark no women conceptions different from the general morality and spiritual tenets and practices of society.

Although it is in the Late Period that women's autobiographies flourish, there are in the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom examples of longer and more varied declarations of virtue. Certainly, Lady Taniy of the 12th Dynasty offers such a declaration, as cited above in chapter III. Likewise, those of the Ladies Tahabet, Ta-Aset, Ta-Sheryet-en-Aset and Taimhotep of the Late Period, all cited above in Chapter III, offer rich and varied moral portraits. Taimhotep's long autobiographical statement contains within it a moral self-presentation which again reaffirms that women drew from the moral conceptions of worthiness and value, that which were standard in society. She describes herself as:

Great of value and greatly praised
A possessor of graciousness, beautiful
of character
Much loved by everyone
Highly praised by her friends
A young woman of value
Skilled in speech
One whose words please
And whose counsel is useful
Taimhotep, justified.
(Brugsch, 1884:919.6-920.1)

Here, Taimhotep's expressed sense of moral and social worthiness, of being of value to her community as evidenced by their love and praise, of being in possession of useful abilities of speech and counsel and of having a beautiful and gracious character, all fit well within the standard conception of a Maatian person.

Given that Maatian moral obligations are incumbent on both women and men without distinction, it is rightfully expected that belief concerning and access to the afterlife were applied equally to women and men. Also, the texts and practices associated with the funerary process, as well as the ultimate state of the risen and immortal transfigured spirit (akh) were likewise equally applicable to woman and man. Fischer (1989:13) concedes this and then, for some unexplained reason adds "but survival in the next world ultimately entailed identification with the male god Osiris . . . ." Actually, immortality in the next world depends not on identification with Osiris or any other male or female identity, but on doing Maat. If one were going to make the argument that identification with a certain

divinity insures immortality, it would have to be Maat, a female divinity. For the ultimate moral and spiritual achievement is to be and become the embodiment of Maat. In fact, one can only become an Osiris by being a Maatian person.

But the reference to gender or sexuality here is a contrived issue, for the central and sole requirement in the quest for immortality is the moral quality of one's life on earth. Moreover, the function of Osiris in this process is essentially to stand as a symbol and witness of both the possibility and promise of resurrection and eternal life through righteousness, i.e., Maat. Furthermore, the assumption of the title Osiris by those who are justified in the balance by the Maat they have done is not an identification, but a sign and reaffirmation of their risen, justified and transfigured status. Thus becoming an Osiris has no more to do with Osiris' maleness than the requirement to do and embody Maat has to do with the femaleness of the divinity Maat. And attempts to identify and uncover maleness here represents more of an effort to discover gender as a ritual of scholarship rather than as a result of open-textured and critical research. If one is looking for lessons in gender relations here, they are not to be found in mistaken assumptions of male identification in the process but in recognition of its irrelevance this particular process.

Robbins (1993:175), perhaps following Fischer, makes similar mistakes both in stating that men identified with Osiris" in order to gain eternal life" and in giving undue meaning to Osiris' maleness. She states in regard to "identifying" with Osiris that "women could also do the same, even though Osiris was a male deity, because there was no true female equivalent." She goes on to say that "This seems to epitomize the position of women in relation to death." This is so, she says, because of the absence of funerary texts, symbols, rituals and forms "that developed specifically for women without male equivalents." She does, however, allow that "all this notwithstanding, it is clear that men and women were assumed to enjoy the same afterlife and require the same necessities." It is, of course, this last sentence which seems most relevant. The other contentions are problematic at best tending to pursue patriarchy at the expense of other lines of analysis which might prove more fruitful.

It is, perhaps, important at this point to note that neither ancient Egypt nor any ancient or modern society, with the possible exception of extremely small communal societies, is free of gender inequalities. The project of human liberation, equality and justice is an historical and ongoing one. And certainly, the forms in which we pose these in modern times were not and could not have been realized in ancient times, given their self-understanding

and social organization. I do not want to put too much emphasis on so-called pre-modern conditions, but it seems clear that one cannot mechanically superimpose our current assumptions about gender on ancient societies. Nor it is helpful to misapply concepts of patriarchy which has its own varied definitions and problematic aspects as a useful analytic tool (Meyers, 1988).

In this case, Robbins not only sees patriarchy where there is none, but misses the communal character and sense of shared heritage of Kemetic society. Useful here is the womanist analysis which stresses relationality even in independence and shared communal culture even while struggling to reshape it in ever more moral and meaningful ways (Williams, 1993). Their insistence on the communal character of human selfhood challenges the individualistic understanding of women and men which stands as a dominant voice in European culture. Within this framework one can see that there is no evidence that ancient Egyptian women saw their ethics and theology as a male product rather than a communal treasure to which all had contributed. For Maatian theology and ethics are, indeed, communal creations and center on good *for, in* and *through* community.

Furthermore, that men have written most of the texts, as in this and all societies, does not diminish the value and beauty of the message of Maat-doing as the ground of human flourishing and eternal life. Nor should it cause one

to deny or minimize the fact that ancient Egyptian women embraced Maatian theology and ethics as their own, as a shared communal heritage. For indeed they saw it and used it as a rich communal resource from which they drew texts and imagery to define themselves morally and socially, to bear witness to truth, to do and defend justice and to leave a testament calling others to the knowledge and practice of Maat, saying, "Come let me lead you on the way of life, the good way of those who follow God" (Tahabet, 13).

In such a context, an individualistic feminist call to or search for independent female forms of Maat-doing and Maat-expressions does not correspond to communal conceptions and realities. For it requires not only that ancient Egyptian women not draw from the communal heritage of moral and theological knowledge and practice, but also that they see themselves as impoverished and outside or at least on the margins of the society they participated in creating. And a critical examination of Kemetic society does not support such a conclusion. Moreover, Robbins' search and desire for female equivalents at every turn is unnecessary and unproductive. It could be asked where is the female equivalent of Moses in Judaism, Buddha in Buddhism, Jesus in Christianity or Muhammad in Islam? But is this an important question in studying these traditions? Or is it more fruitful to ask and pursue the question of the moral quality and social meaning of the doctrines and practices within the

traditions? In Maatian theology there are, as noted above, most often male and female divine principles which are paired or equivalent. But sometimes there is no equivalent and none seems necessary. One might rightfully ask if the conception of the Creator is inclusive of male and female as was done above, given the singular importance of the Creator? But surely there is no value in asking where is the female equivalent of Osiris and even less, where is the male equivalent of Maat? For even though Maat is the defining category of the tradition, it is not its femaleness which makes it so, but its meaning of rightness. And it is a rightness which not only woman and man embrace without distinction, but also the Creator.

Another question of importance concerning the Maatian tradition is the accessibility of the priesthood and ritual practices to women? The evidence shows that there were no injunctions against women's participation in cultural or religious activities including religious rites. As early as the Fourth Dynasty there is evidence of women participating in the priesthood. Given the role that religion played in Egyptian life, this was both a central and very honorable professional. Although they were more frequently represented in the priesthood of Hathor and Neith, they also served in other priesthoods like those of Min and Ptah (Fischer, 1989:12-13). Likewise, they served as *hmt-k3* or ka priests and had supervisory roles (Fischer, 1976:70). Also, they

served as musicians of the sacred (shemayt) performing music for appropriate rituals (Brovarski, Doll and Freed, 1982: 256). Their participation in temple ritual is enhanced and expanded with the evolution of the 18th Dynasty introduction of the office of Divine Wife which was also associated with the titles God's Adorer and God's Hand (Sander-Hansen, 1940; Gitton, 1984; Gitton and Leclant, 1977). Attached to royalty, the office was a source of tremendous power and wealth was much respected under such women as Ameniridis I of the 25th Dynasty and Nitiqret of the 26th Dynasty. It ended with the Persian conquest in 525 B.C.E. and during the tenure of Ankhnesneferibra who was also given the title, First Prophet (High Priest of Amun), and who had reigned for over sixty years (BAR IV:504.988B). Also she left a magnificent piece of art in her beautifully carved sarcophagus which was inscribed with a lengthy set of texts from the Book of Coming Forth By Day (Sander-Hansen, 1957; Budge, 1885).

Having discussed the moral status of the women of ancient Egypt as expressed in Maatian theology, I turn now to the ethical teaching found principally in the Sebait, but with reference to other relevant moral texts where appropriate, such as the autobiographies. One should expect consistency here with the theology and will find it, as is indicated by my use above of Sebaitic verses, to reaffirm a theological point. I have established above that the Sebait, as expressed in Merikara and Ani, do not show a

bifurcated or dual anthropology for men and women. The concept of the human person is defined in female and male terms without distinction (Merikare, 132-133; Ani, X,8-9). This equal respect for the human dignity of women is also evidenced in the designation of man and woman as the people before whom one wishes and strives worth. Using the male and female determination in the word *rmṯ* (people) affirms the desire for moral approbation by woman and man. This is attested to in countless declarations of virtue in which one says one did Maat in order to stand worthy before God and people (Urk. I:201.7, 204.10) or so that one's name might be good before God and people (Urk. I:198.18; Urk. I:203.3) or that one did what people loved and the divinities praised (Urk. IV:62.3) or that one never did evil or injury to any person (Urk. I:40.4, Urk. I:47.5). This single anthropology and moral considerability of both man and woman is often obscured by somewhat meaningless contentions that women were divided in the Sebait and other moral literature into "good" and "bad" women (Troy, 1984). It is a line reasoning which draws heavily on feminist criticism of Judaism and Christianity and does not apply in any meaningful way to Kemetic concepts of women.

An example of this reasoning and the obscurity it creates is Robbins' (1993) and Depla's (1994) discussions of "the dual nature of women concept" which they believe existed in ancient Egypt. This is a theme which appears in

other works on Kemetic women and has become, in many cases, a standard assertion which seeks to demonstrate inequality of men and women in Kemetic thought and practice through its alleged division of women into good and bad women following Troy (1984). Robbins discusses the "dual nature" proposition in the context of discussing female divinities. She (1993:18) says:

> The duality manifested in goddesses was also reflected in the Egyptian view of human nature, where women were seen as incorporating a good and bad side. They were honourable if they met the standards of society, but there was always danger that they would break the rules, in which case they were dishonourable and condemned.

She concedes that "men, too, had to conform." However, she adds that "for them the rules were different. For since society was male-dominated, the norms were set by men for the benefit of men." She cites an alleged non-reciprocal requirement of fidelity for the women but not the man.

First of all she offers no real evidence of different norms for man and woman. And the one example she cites as evidence is not so, as my discussion of DOI (B19) demonstrates. For it explicitly prohibits adultery by man <u>and</u> woman. In fact, I made a point of its reciprocally binding character as distinct from the biblical stress on not lying with your neighbor's wife (Plaskow, 1990:172-173; Lev. 20:10). Secondly, if Robbins is referring to polygamy, she must say so and counter the criticism of expressing a Judeo-Christian bias rather than critical scholarship. Thirdly,

her concession that men and women had to conform to societal moral norms to be honorable is a mere truism which in itself has no profound import. But she wants to pursue her "dual nature" contention as an evidence of male devaluing of women. In this way, she becomes conceptually imprisoned and argues without evidence.

Depla (1984:33) believes that she also has discovered the "good" and "bad" woman and the dual natures phenomenon. Citing Troy (1984), she states that there was a "dualistic nature of women acknowledged in society, what might be termed, the conflict between the 'good' and the 'bad' woman." Also, she argues that the good one was conformist and that the bad one was not. Moreover, she attempts to link this to goddess imagery as did Robbins (1993:78) saying that the tension between male natures is "personified as Horus and Seth (good and evil), and in women, the conflict is represented as being between Sakhmet and Bast." Sekhmet, she tells us, "represented the violent and unpredictable" and Bast "was a goddess of pleasure, music, dance and healing."

The problem with this characterization is that there is little or no textual evidence for such claims. Seth is, as argued above in chapter V, the symbol of evil (isfet) in general and his "opposite," in this case, is Maat not Horus. Horus is a royal image of kingship and filial piety not the symbol of good nature or good. Again, the definitive symbol

of good and right is Maat, a female principle. Likewise, Sekhmet is not simply violent and certainly not unpredictable. She is most definitively the protector of king and Kemet, an assignment which can hardly be accomplished through unpredictability. Depla refers here to a passage from Ptahhotep to in her reference to Sekhmet. But this interpretation is open to debate, since the line "her eye is a storm-wind when she looks" (333) does not mention Sekhmet and the storm-wind can be righteous anger against violence or mistreatment as I read it and discuss it below.

In conclusion, then, there is no textual evidence that women in Kemetic ethical thought are viewed anthropologically different than men. Discourse on "dual natures," especially when it suggests negative evaluation of women is problematic and misleading. What one can say with less problem is that the ancient Egyptian did, in fact, recognize the human capacity for doing good and evil. However this recognition is rooted in and reflective of the concept of the free will of humans, not women's alleged unpredictability and good and bad natures.

Again, the Sebait offer no portrait of women that suggests a different moral anthropology for them. The Sebait are ordinarily addressed directly to a young man, preparing him for public and/or professional service. This may be to a son or apprentice. Sometimes the teaching is to a person's children as a group as in the Sebait of Kagemni

(Gardiner, 1946), Sehetepibra (Sethe, 1926:68-70) and the High Priest Amenemhet (Gardiner, 1910). The Sebait of Amenomope is directed to all as "a teaching for life and well-being (or flourishing)" (Grumach, 1972; Budge, 1924). Moreover, although the Sebait may be addressed directly to a person, in a larger sense, it is always at the same time directed to society as a whole. For the Sebait informed and reflected the ethical standards of society and thus the moral claims of the autobiographies.

The Sebait address issues of correct treatment of and relations with women in several passages, although none is directed to women as a category. In the Old Kingdom Sebait of Hardjedef which is fragmented and brief, the counsel is that "if you are a person of worth, you should marry a woman who is mistress of her heart/mind" (Posener, 1952:11). Even though the phrase *nbt ib* is open to various interpretations, it seems to suggest that a man should choose a wife who is self-controlled in the mental and emotional sense. This is a fundamental value in Maatian ethics and is, as noted in chapter III, best expressed in the model of the geru maa and cool person discussed in the Sebait of Amenomope. The Sebait of Kagemni is short and fragmented like that of Hardjedef and carries no specific instruction toward women. As noted above, females are mentioned along with males as the children whom Kagemni directed his Instructions (II,4).

The Sebait of Ptahhotep is the longest Sebait in the Old Kingdom and addresses treatment of and relations with women in several passages. In passages 52-59, he advises against class and gender arrogance because of one's knowledge, saying that no one has learned an entire craft or field and that "wisdom is rarer than emeralds and yet it is found among the maid servants at the grindstone." Moreover, he cautions against improperly approaching women in any house one enters and speaks to the illusionary and destructive nature of lust and illicit sex. He concludes saying, "As for one who goes wrong through lust . . .none of his plans will prosper" (277-297). In another passage, Ptahhotep instructs against the vice of greed which "alienates mothers and the brothers of mothers and separates wife and husband (198-303).

In a passage which is both difficult and obscure, he seems to be advising against divorcing one's wife for frivolous reasons. And finally, in his longest and most definitive passage on male/female, husband/wife relations, he says:

> If you are worthy and establish your house
> Love your wife passionately and rightfully
> Give her food and clothe her
> Oil is the prescription for her body
> Make her happy as long as you live
> For she is a valuable field for her lord
> Do not judge her
> Deliver her from violence, suppress it
> For her eye is a storm-wind when she sees (it).
> Soothe her heart with what you have gained
> Thus will you cause her to remain in your
> house. (Ptahhotep 325-335)

Here a man is advised to love his wife passionately and rightfully, to provide for her, and make her happy. He is told that she is a "valuable field" to him which is a metaphor from an agricultural society suggesting both a valuable partner for building a family in both a sexual and friendship way. The later interpretation is informed by another passage in which he says, "Don't be mean to your friends. They are one's watered field and more important to one than one's wealth" (Ptahhotep, 491).

It is the Sebait of Kheti, as I have noted above, which is the most important Sebait in regard to the Maatian conception of women and men. For it is in this First Intermediate Period text that yields the *snn nṯr* (imago dei) concept of human beings which is clearly inclusive of women (131, 133). It thus is not only the earliest explicit source of the concept of human dignity, but also and at the same time a reaffirmation of the human equality of man and woman through its including both in the *snn nṯr* concept. Also, Kheti specifically mentions women in his teaching that one should strive to be justified before God by the people (male and female) (30), and sustain the people (male and female) (38) and not oppress the widow (47).

In the New Kingdom Sebait of Ani, a man is instructed, as in Hardjedef to marry a wife and build a family. He says, "it is proper to make a family. Happy is the man whose family is numerous. He is greeted because of his

children (Ani III,1-3). The passage literally says, "it is proper to make people," but it is idiomatic here for family and again carries the male and female determinatives. Ani also instructs a person to provide for his mother as an act of reciprocity for what she has given him, to use her care for him as a model for rearing his own children and not cause her to raise her hand to God concerning him (Ani VII,17-VII,3). Moreover, he advises against woman-chasing and dealing with unknown women (IX,6-7; III,13-16).

In what on first sight might look like a challenge to a woman's sense of personal worthiness, Ani says, "a woman is asked about her husband, a man asked about his rank." But as Depla (1994: 44) notes, "it is unlikely these lines suggest a wife's individuality was subsumed under her husband's. Rather it reflects the career structure and promotion possibilities of Egyptian society." For a woman's rank was often tied to the rank of her husband (VI,14-15). Finally, Ani's longest passage on male/female, husband/wife relations says:

> Do not be harsh with your wife in her house
> when you know she is excellent.
> Do not say to her 'where is it?' or 'bring it to us' when she has put it in the proper place.
> Let your eye observe and keep silent and you will recognize her excellence.
> There is happiness when you support her
> There are many men who do not know this
> But if a man refrains from strife at home
> he will not encounter its inception
> Every man who founds a house must control
> the impetuous heart. (Ani IX,3-6)

This speaks to the responsibility of the man to recognize and respect his wife's excellence, avoid being domineering, be supportive, refrain from strife and be self-controlled.

In the Sebait of Amenomope, concern is shown for the widow whom he mentions twice, saying: "Do not encroach on the boundaries of the widow" (VII,15) and "Do not expose a widow when you find her in the fields or fail to be patient with her reply" (XXV,9-10). Here Amenomope is reaffirming the consideration due the widow as a category of valuable persons. This presupposes the widow is poor, but not all widows were poor as many often had wealth and inherited also from their husbands by law (Eyre, 1984; Pestman, 1961:88).

The Late Period yields the Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor, but by now the tone of the Sebait toward women have become ambivalent and no longer reflect the essentially positive evaluation of women. Tyldesly (1994:34) rightly sees this as a result of foreign influence, most notably Greek and Roman which stressed the inferiority of women. And although Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor still show respect for the good woman and good wife, there is a sense in these writings that they have made a significant rupture with prior Sebait in their negative assumptions and assertions about woman. Thus, Watterson (1991:14) is wrong in saying that Phebhor's devaluing discourse on women "merely confirms the impression given by other *Wisdom Texts*: that the writers of these documents take a largely negative attitude toward

women viewing them as irrational, dangerous and needing to be dominated." Certainly, a collective reading of the texts quoted above does not support such a conclusion. Again, the tendency here seems to be one of searching for isfet rather than Maat, i.e., truth, and for patriarchy rather than real patterns of relations. In fact, although Watterson refers to "other wisdom texts" or Sebait, she only quotes Ankhsheshonqi and Phebhor to make her point in this section. And as I have argued, these two texts represent, for the most part, rupture rather than continuity in Maatian concepts of woman. Thus, one cannot use them as definitive examples of the Kemetic view if they are compared to other Sebait references to women.

Finally, a discussion of the social and legal status of the women of ancient Egypt is in order (Allam, 1989a, 1985, 1984; Ward, 1986; Fischer, 1989). For in a real sense laws are both bearers and reinforcement of a society's morality. Thus, the moral status of ancient Egyptian women is both revealed and conditioned by legal arrangements. The legal scholar, Theodorides (1975:280) discussing the moral and legal status of the ancient Egyptian woman, stated that "she was a 'person' in every sense of the word; a holder of rights, an owner of goods, a subject of respect, aware of having authority over her property, conscious of her surrounding . . . ." Pirenne (1965:44-45) also an authority

in ancient Egyptian law, asserts that Kemet gave the women "a legal status absolutely equal to that of the man."

Although Tyldesley (1994:34) seems to accept this, she modifies it, saying that "in theory at least, the men and women within each social class stood as equals in the eyes of the law." The addition here is the assertion that the law was class conditioned in theory. But where this may be true in practice, in the theory of law, as reflected in texts, i.e., the Instruction to the Prime Minister, the Sebait and Declaration of Virtues, this is not so. Watterson (1991:27) makes the same mistake, asserting that "the de jure rights of an ancient Egyptian women depended upon her class and not on her sex." But then she goes on to contradict herself, saying that "in theory everyone in Egypt, male and female, noble and peasant was equal under the law." In fact, then, there is no class legislation in ancient Egypt as there was in ancient Babylon, and equality under the law was a basic legal principle. For Kemetic law recognized both men and women as persons, regardless of class, and denied special legal advantages based on family, class, gender or status.

Pirenne (1965:44) argues that the texts express a "sentiment of justice based on the conception of deep-seated equality." For him, "this equality of humans is not a gratuitous affirmation nor an expression of theoretical morality." Rather, it is a self-conscious and committed

practice. I allow for less correspondence of theory and practice than Pirenne, but the texts support his contention of a deep-seated conception of human equality and it is this, as I have argued above, that grounded and motivated the high moral status of women in ancient Egypt. Moreover, as Ward (1986:59) has observed, "since the evidence on which this principle is based stretches from the Third Dynasty to the end of the Pharaonic period, it may be taken as fairly-well established that legal equality between men and women was a constant feature of Egyptian society. And only with the introduction of Greek and Roman law in the post-Pharaonic period is this status altered and eventually supplanted (Wenig, 1969:11).

The legal capacity of women of ancient Egypt was expressed in their right to initiate court cases, to offer testimony equal in value to men, to witness and sign legal documents. An example of the exercise of these rights is the case in 1786 B.C.E. of a daughter who sued her own father, seeking restitution of her property when he had given it to his second wife (Hayes, 1955:114ff). Another example is the long-term case recorded in the Inscriptions of Mose, scribe of the Treasury of the Temple of Ptah, which occurred during the reign of Ramesses II (1304-1238 B.C.E.) (Gaballa, 1977). The case involved ownership, transfer and trusteeship of land. Several women participated in the case, confirming that women could own land, could act as trustees,

could initiate court actions and be held to be competent in a law court men, "enjoying all aspects of equality under law" (Watterson, 1991:34). This legal capacity contrasts starkly with the legal status of women in ancient Greece who had no legal status or capacity and required a guardian (kyrios) in all matters of importance (Tichner, 1922; Taubenschlag, 1938, 1955). It is this capacity and relative freedom of ancient Egyptian women that caused many Greek women to come to Kemet and to seek to be under Kemetic law (Pomeroy, 1984). The legal capacity of ancient Egyptian women was also in marked contrast to women of ancient Israel who could not act as witnesses in court or act as guardians or agents for others (Archer, 1990). Safrai et al (1976 I: 505) note that in Jewish law "Rights and duties are generally limited to men. However, by way of personification, certain rules are applied also to non-human beings."

Also, women of ancient Egypt had the right to own, inherit, buy and sell property and transfer it or will it to heirs, as well as engage in business and commerce and also were partners in financial and business transactions (Menu, 1989; Allam, 1989b). In the earliest autobiography available, the Lady Nebsent of the Third Dynasty "made a will to her children" (Urk. I:2.15). This fact "is of major significance, as it reveals beyond all doubt a woman with rights in immovables at the dawn of Egyptian civilization before the era of the great pyramids" (Allam, 1989b:125).

Moreover, women could and did enter various professions (Ward, 19889, 1986; Fischer, 1985, 1989). Among the professional position they held were: priestess, scribe, doctor, judge, treasurer, steward, weaver, mid-wife, wigmaker, mourner, musician, dancer. They were also land owners, renters, farmers and businesswomen (Menu, 1989). Women also held administrative and supervisory positions, more so in the Old Kingdom than in the Middle Kingdom. We have records of two women prime ministers, Lady Nebet who was also a judge in the Sixth Dynasty and another women of the 26th Dynasty (Fischer, 1976:74). Furthermore, we have records of six female pharaohs or ruling queens: Meryt-Neith, 1st Dynasty; Nitiqeret (Nictoris), 6th Dynasty; Sobeknefrw, 12th Dynasty; Hatshepsut, 18th Dynasty; Nefertiti, 18th Dynasty; and Tawesret, 19th Dynasty (Tyldesley, 1994: Chapter 7). Of these, clearly the most active and powerful was Hatshepsut to whom we have referred throughout. Her legacy in literature and monuments is an extensive one (Urk. IV:215-313).

Also, it should be noted that queens like Ahotep II, Ahmose Nefertari and Tiy, all of the 18th Dynasty, wielded considerable power, even without the position of pharaoh (Robbins, 1993: Chapter 2). Here, however, it should be noted that in spite of the legal capacity of women for holding public office and professional and administrative positions, there is a clear pattern of overwhelming male presence in these positions. Ward (1986:60) commenting on

this, says "that official functions were relegated to men seems more a matter of accepted custom than a conscious desire to keep women out of politics and government." His sense is that although some chose to enter public office, many if not most, chose not to. Menu (1989:205) in her study of ancient Egyptian women in business comes to a similar conclusion. She says, "It seems that women had a full capacity of rights, but that in daily life they often left it up to their husbands." This immediately raises the question of to what degree "the customary" was restrictive in itself and tended to limit access in practice. Still, one can image that many women actually chose not to go into public office even though both the law and the presence of other women in these offices reaffirmed that they could in fact do it. And we can also assume that our current conception of what a woman should be interested in and what constitutes a gender issue, did not have the same meaning or currency for them.

Finally, it is also of value to look at family relations to see if this area was a context which reaffirmed or undermined the moral status of ancient Egyptian women. Breasted (1934:121) in discussing ancient Egyptian morality and family relations felt sure that ancient Egypt provided "conclusive evidence that moral discernment had its roots in the life of the family." It was, of course, the quality of relations between male and female and family members which

led to this conclusion. Some scholars argue that it is the matrilineal focus and emphasis in the Kemetic family which supports rights for women and the emergence of strong and active women. Also, some link this to Kemet's African heritage. Diop (1979:214-220; 1959:34ff) has for a long time stressed the African character of Kemetic culture and family relations and its "matriarchical" character. Redford (1967:65, 69) also talks about a similar matriarchy in the 18th Dynasty. More recently, Tyldesley (1993:40) suggested that "the recognition that descent could pass through both the female and male liens, a characteristic of several African cultures, must also have been instrumental in protecting the rights of women."

Earlier, Lesko (1987:1) had made a similar observation but added an emphasis on the role of theology. She states that "the idea that the familial line of descent was traced thru the women of the family may have ben indigenous to Egypt's cultural African heritage as anthropologists believe, but it was given a theological stamp of approval with regard to the royal family." Lesko, as I have argued above, is correct about the central role of both African heritage and Kemetic theology in the elevated moral status of women. But she does not realize or argue that the theological basis for the principle of male/female equality was not simply for the royal household, but for women in

general. This is, of course, a point I have discussed at length above.

Although the most numerous marriage contracts are found in the period of Greek domination, documents discovered in other periods tend to show, as Ward (1986:59) has stated, a long-term constancy. Pestman (1961) and Lüddeckens (1960) have provided an excellent assemblage and study of documents relating to marriage and property settlements, models of which extend from the seventh century through the Late Period to the period of Greek domination. From these, and an abundance of other documents, we encounter a process of women's self-assertion and participation which is both unique and instructive (Allam, 1981; Whale, 1989). Marriage is essentially a social act and arrangement rather than a juridical one (Allam, 1981:116). It is established, as Ani and Hardjedef tell us, to make a family and strengthen community. As Obenga (1992:165) states, "women were neither under the authority of their husbands nor their eldest sons." They enter the marriage "being equal to men in esteem as well as Law." In later periods, they make contracts for the benefit of husband or wife containing within them the promise of care, fidelity and shared property. In fact, "all property acquired by a couple during the marriage was legally regarded as a communal asset" (Tyldesley, 1994:43). If a spouse died, 1/3 went to the spouse, 1/3 to the children and 1/3 to the sisters and

brothers. Also, daughters and sons had equal rights of inheritance, and Kemetic women, unlike women in ancient Israel and Greece, had the right to divorce.

Kemetic women also had the right to live alone which according to Tyldesley (1994:37) was "a startling innovation at a time when female members of all major civilizations were to a greater or lesser extent relegated to subordinate status and ranked with dependent children and mentally disturbed as being inferior to men." This is a broad stroke and does not really apply to Nubia, but as noted above, does apply to neighboring European and Western Asian societies. In this context, Ramesses III, having restored Maat after a chaotic situation, boasts that he had "enabled the woman of Egypt to go her way, her journeys being extended where she wished without strangers or any person interfering (*th3*) with her on the road" (pHarris I:pl.78. 9).

Robbins (1993: 139) makes the startling assertion in reference to this passage, saying "As a corollary, one must suppose that women were often in danger of being mugged or perhaps, raped if they went out alone, a problem still present in modern society." But she leaves out "strangers" and translates "*th3*" as "assault" instead of "interfere." The reality is that Ramesses is claiming to restore Maat to its place after an isfetic situation. For he goes on to talk about bringing peace and security to men and women, saying he stationed the infantry and chariots at home; their

weapons were at ease, and they were happy. "Their wives were with them, their children at their side. They did not look behind them, for their hearts were content. For I was with them as defense and protection of their persons. I sustained the whole land whether foreigners, the masses, the nobles, the sun-folk, *male* and *female*" (78:12-13) (emphasis mine).

Parents were, of course, respected and cared for. One of the most important moral claims one could make in a declaration of virtue was "I was beloved of my father and beloved of my mother" or a similar assertion, i.e., "beloved of my father and praised of my mother." This, in turn, was usually joined to the assertion that "I was kind to my brothers and sisters" (Urk. I:47). Although Egyptologists for a long time called women attached to the Court and in homes "harem" and "concubines," this proved to be incorrect. Ward (1986: Chapter 4) has argued cogently that *ẖnr* means musician and *ḥbswt*, a legal wife other than the first. This, of course, means that although monogamy appears more widespread, polygamy was practiced (Whale, 1989).

In conclusion, then, both written documents and art from tombs give us a picture of strong and warm family ties. As Wildung and Schoske (1985:12) note:

> In ancient Egypt, the relations between man and woman, as demonstrated in scenes from the tombs, revealed a fundamental equality of the two sexes. When one refers to other ancient civilizations and even to world history in general, it appears that the condition of the woman in Egypt was so

> exceptional that it was sometimes used to defend the theses otherwise erroneous, that the structure of Pharonic civilization was based on matriarchy."

I have, above, put the term matriarchy used by Diop and Redford in quotes. For I am unaware of any matriarchy in history. Thus, I use the term "matrilineal emphasis" which calls attention to lineage and at the same time indicates it has strong social implications. The love songs of the New Kingdom also reaffirm this lovingness to which Wildung and Schoske refer (Fox, 1985; White, 1978; Foster, 1974; Gardiner, 1931). And as Lesko (1986) notes, they reveal and reaffirm the woman as subject who was assertive and self-conscious, and of course, they give us another and important source of women's voices.

In both love poetry and marriage the words senet (sister) and sen (brother) became words of endearment for unmarried and married loved ones. This perhaps suggests several things. First, it suggests an emulation of the natural relation of kinship with its close bonding and sense of commitment (Franke, 1983:310). It also suggests, "a depth of feeling transcending the physical" (Whale, 1989:274). And finally, it perhaps suggests a more relaxed approach to love in marriage, keeping the formal at a distance. In any case, this represents one more aspect of mutuality and equality and points again to the family as the source and guardian of what Breasted (1934) called "the dawn of conscience." And certainly, the development of this moral consciousness in

Kemet is clearly unique in its conception and affirmation of the moral status of women.

8.1.7 The Relationality-Responsibility Paradigm

Maatian moral life is lived in the context of community and tradition which implies and requires relations and responsibility. In ancient Egypt moral life is viewed in terms of a series of interlocking relationships and sets of responsibilities. One is defined and develops morally and socially by the quality of relations one has with God, king (state), people of one's district and town, members of one's family, friends and strangers. The ground of these relationships and the aspirations for them is, of course, Maat. One does Maat for God and king because they love it, will it and desire it. Moreover, it is that by which God and humans live and the universe is sustained. To stand worthy (*im3hw, im3hyt*) before God and humans is a central aim of all Maat-doing.

The Maatian relationality responsibility model, then, offers an essential framework in which ethical life is lived and discussed. It both differs from and resembles current conceptions of this model (Curran, 1982:44ff; Niebuhr, 1978). An important current conception of this model which finds common ground with Maatian ethics is the ethics of H.R. Niebuhr (1978). At the heart of the idea of responsibility is the image of man-the-answerer (homo dialogicus), "man engaged in dialog, man acting in response to action

upon him" (1978:56). Moral activity is thus defined in terms of self-understanding and the ability and will to respond to others. This model locates responsibility for action directly in the agent in an interactional process, an instrument and context of self-understanding which poses both possibilities and limitations.

The four constitutive elements of this process Niebuhr (1978:61) says, is: 1) "responsiveness"--"all action is a response to action on us;" 2) "interpretation"--"such action is only the action of self or a moral action if it is a response to interpreted action upon us"--a response to the question "what's going on?;" 3) "accountability"--"action undertaken in anticipation of response, consequences by others, thus a question of Who or What is my response good for?;" and 4) "social solidarity"--"response which reflects and reinforces continuity of self in a continuing discourse or interaction among beings forming a continuing society" or community.

Niebuhr's four elements of responsibility provide interesting parallels in Maatian ethics. In fact, they are paralleled by Jan Assmann's (1989a) categories for analyzing Maatian discourse. Assmann's categories are: 1) active solidarity (reciprocity); 2) communicative solidarity (shared moral language); and 3) intentional solidarity (prescriptive altruism). In terms of active solidarity through reciprocity, Assmann (1989a:39), using the Book of

Khun-Anup as a central focus, argues that such reciprocity demands

> a social memory and horizon of motivation which does not reconstitute itself newly from day to day according to momentary interests, but establishes itself in the past, encompassing 'yesterday' and 'today,' attaching today to yesterday and thus linking action to consequences, acting to success and sowing to reaping.

This is clearly responsible action in the sense of Maat and at the heart of this engagement is the imperative as Khun-Anup says to "act for one who acts for you" (B2,108). And as Assmann (1989a:40) states, " 'to act one for another' supposes 'thinking one of the other,' and 'knowing the one which one has known'." Therefore, to respond to another is to be, first of all, sensitive to another, to seek to know another and to understand one's relationship to that other.

Essentially, "acting for one who acts for you" is an expression of reciprocity, one of the cardinal virtues of Maat. Indeed, as noted above, a text of Neferhotep defines Maat as reciprocity, saying: "the reward of one who acts is that one will act for him. That is Maat in the heart/mind of God" (Helck, 1975:29.40). This does not mean that reciprocity is to be equated with Maat or that it is the central moral value of Maat. Neither is it to be perceived as a more fundamental moral conception in Maatian ethics than justice as Becker (1986:268) has argued for ethics in general. Rather, it is as noted above, a cardinal Maatian

virtue, a virtue which is essential, even indispensable, to creating and sustaining the Maatian society.

The texts suggest that reciprocity is both a process in the structure of existence and a vital social practice and that both the process and practice are grounded in Maat. In the Maatian world order, "to every action there is a response and a blow is repaid with its like" (Merikara, 123). Thus, the doer of Maat will be given Maat, and the doer of isfet will be given isfet. As the Shabaka Text says, "Maat is given to one who does what is loved," the loved here being Maat. And "Isfet is given to one who does what is hated," i.e., isfet (57). It is in this context that Unas comes to the Afterworld bearing Maat and wants and expects to be justified by the Maat he has done on earth (PT 316-317). Moreover, in Coming Forth, Chapter 17, it says of the Divine, "he gives isfet to one who does it and Maat to one who comes bearing it." And again, Ptahhotep says "Established (or enduring) is one whose standard is Maat, who walks according to its ways. He shall make a will by it. But the greedy (isfetic) person will not have even a grave" (PT 331). Here the Maatian person is promised groundedness and enduringness which have both this-world and next-world implications. And the isfetic person, here the greedy one, *'wn-ib*, is linked with lacking groundedness and endurance as expressed in the metaphor of lacking even a

grave or tomb, which is the symbol of endurance in the mind and mouth of the community.

Thus, reciprocity as a moral value and process, is inherent in the Maatian world order, or in other words, in the structure of existence through Maat. And it is this understanding of its working in the world that informs its conception and practice in community in the social sense. For not only does Maat-doing in community promise the reward of eternity, it also reinforces and sustains community itself. In other words, the principle and practice of reciprocity not only increases mutual good in the world and community, it also provides a process by which moral agents develop a disposition for reciprocation that is necessary for mutually productive exchanges which create and sustain primary human goods (Becker, 1986:132-133).

It is in this context that Lady Ta-Aset states that the good one does for others is actually being done for oneself. She says, "truly one who acts (for others) is (actually) acting for himself--*wnn ir ir(.f) n.f*" (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:191:Jf). And projecting the benefit of Maat-doing for future generations in community, Nakhtefmut says, "*iw.i rḫ.kwi prw ir 3ḫw wḏ3t gm s msw ḥr-s3 dw3*--I know the results of doing what is of value; it is a storehouse which children will find in the future (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985: 456.3-4). Again, the stress here is on building moral community both for the present and the future. And it is

within this moral understanding that Taharqa says "*nfrwy is irt n irt kbb is ib n ir(t) n irw n.f*--How good it is to act for one who acts. At peace is the heart of one who acts for one who acted for him" (Macadam, 1949 I:pl.18.4).

Assmann (1990:66-69) argues that the process of reciprocity is not automatic or even guaranteed in a cosmic sense. Instead, he says the guarantee lies rather in the solidarity of the group which on one level is essentially "vertical solidarity." Finally, he argues that in the Late Period, the Divinity is often the subject too which one turns for reward, suggesting again that Maat is assumed to be less operative in this period than in the Middle Kingdom by the ancient Egyptians. He cites a standard Maatian assertion in this regard--"whoever does Good, God rewards them" (Assmann, 1990:67). As I have argued above, the texts do not support assumptions about the disappearance of Maat or the absence of a process of reciprocity in the structure of existence. On the contrary,, the texts quoted above and below attest to the opposite.

Moreover, reference to the Divinity intervening in the process, as noted above, insures its working; the intervention does not cancel or diminish it. Afterall, it is Maat which undergirds and motivates both the actions of the Divinity and the process of reciprocity in Maatian theology and ethics. Thus, a conceptual separation of the workings of Maat in the world and God who loves, wills and does it is

not only artificial and unnecessary but also un-Kemetic. Either-or thinking in critical analysis is almost always problematic, but in analyzing Kemetic thought, it is rarely, if ever, useful. Clearly, there is no evidence that ancient Egyptians saw appeals to the Divinity as a substitute for Maat. And as noted above, the way of God is in fact the way of Maat. Therefore, the declarations of virtues project a way of God in the Late Period which is clearly similar in form and content to the way of Maat earlier.

In this regard, Somtutefnakht's declaration in the Late Period that his "heart sought Maat in your temple day and night" (Urk. II:3) is neither less nor more respectful of the presence and intervening power of the Divinity than the Old Kingdom declarations of having spoken and done Maat because God wills it, loves and desires it (Urk. I:48.6ff; 57.11ff) or those similar in the periods which follow. Nor are Otto's (1958) and Jansen-Winkeln's (1981) collections of biographies, with their frequent references to divine action or intervention, more indicative of Kemetic belief in an intervening God than Ptahhotep's assertion that isfetic acts will be punished by God and that one should not rely on violence but live in peace (99ff). For "it is not the violence of men which prevails. It is the command of God which prevails" (115-116). In fact, it is this passage on the intervening role of God and the one immediately above on the unchanged enduringness, greatness and effectiveness of

Maat (88-98) that shows the simultaneous existence and interrelatedness of these two fundamental conceptions in Maatian theology and ethics.

Certainly there are more references to God in Late Period literature, but these are still references to a God of Maat, not one with a different love, will or desire than Maat. On the contrary, even at the end of Kemetic civilization, one reads in one of the last Sebait that God decrees what comes, punishes and shows mercy to the impious person, directs the heart and tongue, "gives Maat" and causes the Maatian (pious) person to prosper (AEL III:209.30,18-32,15). Moreover, one reads in the same text, as in Ptahhotep, not only the concept of the intervening God who commands fate and future (30,16) but also a constant reiteration of the relationship between deed and result as Lichtheim (1983:138) states. In a word, although God, in this text, creates paradoxes of fate and fortune, still the relationship between deed and result is not abandoned. Thus, Phebhor says of God, "He metes out punishment for offenses. He gives reward for benefactions (AEL III:212.34,19). And he says of reciprocity, "the evil man whose heart loves evil will find it. He who thinks of the good is one who masters it: (AEL III:209.30,2-3). This argument is in no way offered to dismiss or diminish the dynamic interrelatedness and interactiveness of the Divine and Maat. Rather, it is to reaffirm that dynamic and ongoing relationship and to

argue its presence in the earliest and latest documents (Garnot, 1963: 118-120; Lichtheim, 1992:98-101).

Certainly, the most extensive discourse on reciprocity and its relationship to Maat is found in the Book of Khun-Anup (Vogelsang, 1964: Parkinson, 1991). Assmann (1990:67) believes that the concepts of reciprocity and solidarity he finds here and in other Middle Kingdom texts are conceived in their representation of Maat as <u>vertical</u>. For he says, it is not to the "neighbor" one appeals, but the prince, king or God for justice. Thus, he says, Maat works from above to below and this represents a "vertical solidarity." The problem immediately posed by such an interpretation, especially as it relates to God, is that appeals to God in any religion, including Judaism and Christianity, are vertical solidarity appeals. For God is clearly above. But having said that, I am not sure much more can be conceptually extracted from this. Its obviousness diminishes its utility and there are clearly more complex and fruitful ways of interpreting the God-human relationship, as I have argued above.

Moreover, Assmann's contention that Khun-Anup's appeal to Rensi or the king is essentially an appeal to a reciprocity rooted in vertical solidarity is also problematic. For the ground of Khun-Anup's appeal and demand for justice lies not in Rensi's or the king's high social position or office, but in the principle and practice of Maat. And Maat makes

no distinction of persons; it requires all to act equally. The appeal for justice, then, is not a class or status appeal, but a Maat-based appeal. And Khun-Anup's self-assertion is a demand for Rensi to "speak Maat and do Maat" (B1,320) not a request for royal or class favor. Thus, it is a Maat-based appeal for justice informed by concepts of reciprocity and communal solidarity in a shared moral tradition.

Khun-Anup's criticism of Rensi's failure to practice the morality of Maat is severe and uncompromising. It recognizes neither class, power or status as a basis for exemption from Maat-doing. In fact, the severity of his criticism of Rensi reflects a confidence in the moral knowledge that the demands of Maat applies equally to everyone--king and commoner, judicial administrator and peasant. It is this spirit that Khun-Anup tells Rensi that he is not afraid of him as evidenced by his returning repeatedly to petition and even reproach him. Thus, Khun-Anup says:

> No fear of you causes me to petition you. You do not know my heart/mind. A self-controlled one who returns to reproach you is not afraid of him to whom he presents a claim. (B1,299)

Here I follow Lichtheim's (AEL I:180) translation of "*irt ṯst*" as "to reproach" rather than Faulkner's (Simpson, 1973:46) reading of it as "make a complaint," although both uses are acceptable. But the use of "*ṯsi*" to indicate "reprove" which appears in Merikara (56) and Sinuhe (B,41)

among other places (see Perry, 1986:500) seems more appropriate. For Khun-Anup's constant critique of Rensi is evident and central and carries with it an explicit and implicit confidence of rightness based on his understanding of the demands of Maat.

Thus, given his emphasis on Maat and the absence of any hint of his seeking judicial favor, Khun-Anup is in reality appealing to Rensi only in a procedural sense; in the moral sense, the substance and ground of his appeal is Maat. Therefore, his appeal is to the shared moral vision of Maat. It is an appeal which could have been made procedurally as well to the neighbor, brother, sister, wife, husband or others who injured, depending upon the circumstances. However, given the circumstances in the text of Nemtynakht's injury and refusal of restitution, his position as a subordinate of Rensi and the established political protocol of appeal, Khun-Anup of necessity makes a specific procedural appeal for justice to Rensi. But he is appealing within a justice system and moral system based on Maat and thus, Maat grounds his appeal and serves as the moral motivation and judicial framework for Rensi to act.

Even when Khun-Anup praises Rensi as a model leader, "free from greed and baseness, a destroyer of falsehood, one who brings Maat into being and one who comes at the voice of the caller" (B1,65-68), it is to pose a paradigm by which Rensi is to understand himself and his responsibility.

Moreover, he uses the paradigm also as a standard by which he criticizes Rensi. Thus, he says to Rensi, "You are educated, skillful and accomplished. But not in order for you to plunder. You should be the model for all people, but (instead) your affairs are in disorder" (B1,260-262). Again, then, Khun-Anup's appeal is more definitively understood as an appeal to the Maatian paradigm not the person or even the office.

Therefore, raising up of Maat as the balance of the land, as a divine norm and as a standard of leadership and community solidarity is clearly the point of departure and basis for the discussion of reciprocity and the responsiveness this requires. Without this putting of Maat at the center, the discourse is deprived of both its ground and meaning. And in such a case, the appeal procedure is shaped by Assmann's concept of vertical solidarity, which reduces Maat to a class concept and justice to a practice of political favor. This, of course, is in contradiction to the letter and spirit of Maatian justice which provides the form and content of Khun-Anup's critique of what he perceives as Rensi's failure to honor the moral and judicial demands of the Maatian tradition he obviously assumes they share, a tradition of reciprocal responsiveness.

Appealing, then, to the shared principle of Maat, Khun-Anup offers four basic forms of reciprocity: recompensatory, anticipatory, restraining and initiatory. The first form is

a reciprocity of doing good for the good received. Thus, he says, "act for one who acts for you" (B2,109-110). It is as Becker (1986;124) notes, commitment to the principle that "we ought to be disposed to make fitting and proportional returns, not only for the good we solicit, and not only for the good we explicitly accept, but for all the good we are aware of having received." This awareness and response to it is central in drawing the line between the sekhetic person who is deaf to Maat and the sedjemic person who listens and responds to the demands of Maat as will be discussed below.

Khun-Anup introduces an anticipatory form of reciprocity in his assertion that "a good deed returns to its place of yesterday" (B1,109). Here one encounters again the understanding in Maatian ethics that Maat-doing is rewarded with a returned good. Thus, in another passage Khun-Anup tells Rensi "desire to live long, for it is said doing Maat is breath to the nose" (B1,146). The sense here is that, Maat produces life and isfet its opposite--in this world and the next. This, as shown above, is a constant theme in Maatian literature and again represents an expectation of a lawful return of good which is done. Reaffirming this theme, Amenemhet says of the Maatian person that "*wnn rn.f mn m mnw n ḥtm.n irt.n.f r t3*--his name shall endure as a monument and what he has done on earth shall not perish" (Mokhtar, 1983:117.pl.xxii, 10). And in his classic passage on Maat's

value, Khun-Anup says that one should "speak Maat and do Maat. For it is mighty; it is great, it endures. Its value has been proven. It leads one to worthiness" (B1,320-322). Likewise, he says, "evil conduct does not achieve its goal, but a person of fortitude reaches land" (B1,325-326). The word used here, "*ḫry s3*" literally means "possessing a back" in the sense of what we call "having backbone, mettle or fortitude." Hence, I have translated it as a person of fortitude with the understanding that it is moral fortitude to which Khun-Anup is referring as the ground of success and flourishing indicated in the metaphor "reaching (dry) land" or "landing."

A third form of reciprocity which Khun-Anup inserts in his discourse on Maat is restraining reciprocity. It is a reciprocity which requires restraint from and of evil conduct by oneself and others. Thus, Khun-Anup cautions against repaying good with evil saying, "answer not good with evil and put not one thing in the place of another" (B1,151-152). Here one is constrained from failing to give the fitting response and substituting the negative for the positive. This admonition is repeated several times and culminates at the end of the ninth and last petition in which Khun-Anup again asks for a reciprocity which yields an appropriate response. Putting it in the language of restraint he says: "do not be biased in hearing my wish; do not hide your face from one you know; do not be blind to one you have seen; and

do not drive away one who appeals to you" (B2,104-106). These four evils: bias, ignoring a familiar, intentional blindness to injustice (also in B1,188) and driving away the petitioner are posed as violations of moral community and thus, Khun-Anup appeals to Rensi to restrain himself from such evils.

But restraining reciprocity is not simply not doing evil which injures persons and undermines community. It is also a practice of resisting evil. This resistance takes at least three forms: retributive, restitutive and destructive restraint. All forms of this resistance to evil appear in Khun-Anup's discourse on Maat. Certainly, Khun-Anup wants restitution of the goods taken from him. Thus, his appeal to Rensi not to let the robbery by Nemtynakht stand is made early and throughout his discourse. His proposal to Nemtynakht that he buy back his seized donkey for the value of the wisp of barley the donkey ate suggests a commitment to restitution on his part. And his appeal to Rensi is for restitution on his behalf. Thus, he raises the question "will a great lord take a share of that which is (now) ownerless and steal on that account alone?" or will he in the interest of Maat, reciprocity and moral community return it (B1,92-93)? The answer is, of course, not to steal but to return the property to its rightful owner. For this is one of the basic principles of justice. As the story ends, restitution takes the form not only of the return of Khun-

Anup's property, but the giving of Nemtynakht's property to Khun-Anup as a part of the restitution.

Retribution as a form of restraining reciprocity is also addressed in Khun-Anup. Here punishment of offenders like restitution to the victims is seen as key to restoring community and confidence in it as a context in which justice can be and is obtained. Thus, Khun-Anup says to Rensi "punish the robber, save the sufferer . . .punish him who should be punished . . ." (B1,143; 147). Moreover, he asks Rensi as judge, "if you ignore the violent person who then will punish wrongdoing (B1,167-168)? Khun-Anup therefore poses punishment as a way to not only "save the sufferer" and by extension his confidence in the justice system, but also to maintain that system of justice itself. For he says

> one who is patient prolongs friendship, but one who destroys a case, becomes one not trusted (literally one whom one does not know what is in (his) heart). If law is subverted and the standard of right is destroyed, the poor person cannot survive, for he is robbed and Maat (justice) does not address him. (B1,272-275)

Thus, Khun-Anup reaffirms the need for trust of one's system of justice and its administrators. And he suggests that such confidence is only possible when law is not subverted and standards of right are not destroyed. In a word, Maat must address the need of the poor and weak who cannot survive without it and show no preference to the powerful. These conditions, he suggests, are not only essentially to

the Maatian system of justice, but also to the moral grounding of community.

Restraint of others as a form of reciprocity, also assumes the form of the obligation to eliminate or destroy evil. As Becker (1986:97) notes in his discussion of reciprocity, resisting evil is a fundamental expression of reciprocity as a virtue which aids justice and community solidarity. As he states, "when confronted with the choice, we must opt for efforts to reduce or eliminate evil." Clearly, Khun-Anup sees the reduction and elimination of evil as a central way "one acts for one who acts for him." One of his five descriptions of the Maatian leader is that he is "one who destroys falsehood" (B1,66) which is another way of saying one who destroys isfet, both opposites of my Maat. And his entire discourse on Maat is informed by parallel emphases on reducing and eliminating evil and upholding and creating Maat. In fact, in his sixth petition to Rensi, Khun-Anup links the two practices in a mutually implicative and reinforcing way saying, "one who lessens falsehood creates Maat, and one who creates good, destroys evil" (B1,242-242).

A fifth and final form of reciprocity which appears in Khun-Anup's discourse on Maat is initiating reciprocity. Here, one takes the initiative in doing good in order to set an example to be emulated and to create a context of maximum mutuality. This form of reciprocity is found in Khun-Anup's

advice to Rensi when he says: "Do to the doer that s/he may also do. It is thanking one for what one may do, blocking a blow before it strikes and giving an assignment to one which is skillful" (B1,109-111). It is this form of reciprocity which seems especially morally productive, for it proposes acting in such a way to create Maat or good in the world, to do it without being asked but with a profound concern for creating the moral community in which one wishes to live. And it is this form of reciprocity which Phebhor suggests when he says, "he who loves his neighbor will find a family around him" (16,8).

This initiating form of reciprocity is also expressed in the concept of acting for oneself by acting for others and of realizing that on one level, Maat-doing benefits the doer more than the one for who its done. Thus, one text says, "It is more useful to one who does it than one for whom its done (Vernus, 1976: 145). And again, Lady Ta-Aset says that those who do good for others are actually doing it for themselves (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:189.4). It is within this understanding that the High Priest, Hor, says:

> rdi.n.i mrwt.i ḥr tp t3
> s'3s.n.i ḥswt.i m niwt.i
> rḥ.n.i is gm.n.i sn m-ht
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:517.8-9)

> I gave my love on earth
> And I made numerous my praises in my city
> For I knew I would find them again afterwards.

In such a context, Maat-doing becomes a storehouse of goods from which present and future generations can draw and by which moral community is sustained and expanded.

A second theme which Assmann (1989a:42) treats in explaining his communicative solidarity is the moral practice and value of hearing "the other." He (1989:43) states that "the art of hearing is the great theme in Egyptian anthropology. In fact, he says that the "aim of Egyptian education is the man who knows how to listen, *homo auditor*," one who listens and acts in response to God and others. Clearly, this resembles Niebuhr's responder who is concerned with hearing and responding meaningfully to the voice of God and others. In Khun-Anup's discourse on Maat, one immediately encounters his stress on hearing and responding. He defines a Maatian leader as "one who comes at the voice of the caller" (B1,67-68). And he says to Rensi in seeking justice, "when I speak, may you hear" (B1,68). Later on he tells Rensi that in the context of Maatian justice, "one addressed should answer" (B1,215) and that one should "not answer with the answer of silence"" (B1,315). In fact, one of his main criticisms of Rensi is "hearer, you do not hear" (B1,180). Thus, he says of Rensi, "his face is blind to what he should see, deaf to what he should hear and his heart strays from what he should remember" (B1,188).

Surely, the Sebait of Ptahhotep is the locus classicus of the discourse on hearing as the core of moral sensitivity

and responsiveness. In fact, Ptahhotep teaches that "hearing is better than everything--*nfr sḏm r ntt nbt*" (541). For "it creates good will--*ḫpr mrwt nfrt*" (542). Moreover, Ptahhotep stresses the value of hearing as the ground for moral sensitivity saying "if hearing enters the listener, the listener becomes a hearer" (535-536). Both listening and hearing are forms of responsiveness but hearing is a more profound form of responding. Thus, Ptahhotep says, "it is the heart which causes its owner to hear or not hear, for the life, prosperity and health of a man depends on his heart" (550-552). And finally, Ptahhotep says the responsive person always acts. For "he who acts according to what is said, is indeed one who loves hearing" (554).

It is here that one makes a distinction in Maatian literature between the sekhetic person who is deaf (*sẖ*) to Maat and the sedjemic person who listens to and obeys (*sḏm*) Maat. Thus, in the Declarations of Innocence one asserts "I have not been deaf to Maat" (B 24), a parallel to the declaration "I have not been blind to (winked at) injustice" (B 26). And as noted above, one of Khun-Anup's criticisms of Rensi is that he is "blind to what he should see." Both "deafness to the demands of Maat and intentional blindness to injustice are metaphors for the morally insensitive who are disabled in their humanity by not hearing and seeing Maat and acting accordingly. Usually, one translates deafness to Maat as deathness to truth which is certainly

correct. But in its more expansive sense, it means "deafness to Maat" in its most inclusive meaning of "rightness, i.e., especially the rightness of relationships informed by and based on--among other things: truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reci-procity and order.

Thus, in the positive sense, Intef defines himself as a sedjemic person as opposed to the sekhetic, saying "*ink sḏmw sḏm m3't sw3w3 is st ḥr ib*--I am a listener who listens to Maat and ponders it in his heart" (Budge, 1912: pl.23. 13). He then goes on to speak of the good he has done to his neighbors, friends and the needy, thus linking listening to Maat with doing Maat. Mentuworse is even more direct in his linking of Maat-hearing to Maat-doing, stating that: "*ink sḏmw r wn m3' tm nm' n nb ḏb3w*--I am a hearer of Maat, one who does not lean toward the possessor of bribes" (Sethe, 1928:79.17-18). Therefore, hearing Maat is not only listening to and acting on truth, but also listening to and responding rightfully to the demands of justice.

Thirdly, Assmann (1989a:51) argues that in terms of intentional solidarity, it is a question of the internality of human responsiveness. "After having treated action and speaking/hearing as modes of communicative integration of the individual in society, we are now confronted with the interior man, that is to say, that which is related to will and mentality." It is in Maatian ethics a question of the heart-mind (*ib, ḥ3ty*), for again, it requires a moral sensi-

tivity to others. By moral sensitivity, I mean, as the category *ib*, mind-heart suggests, both cognitive and affective sensibility, consciousness and conscience, knowing and feeling the other. This, of course, is at the heart of communitarian virtue ethics and represents the dual thrust of the cultivation of virtues. As MacIntyre (1981:140) says, "virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways." Thus, "to act virtuously is not, as Kant was to later think, to act against inclination but to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of virtues."

Another point of similarity of conceptual emphasis between the Maatian ethical tradition and Niebuhrian responsibility ethics is the concept of "the fitting, the appropriate--*3ḫ*." In Maatian ethics and other African ethics, "the fitting" or "propriety" is a key ethical concept. It is one of the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Maat, as defined in contemporary Maatian ethics, i.e., truth, justice, propriety (fittingness), harmony, balance, reciprocity and order (Karenga, 1986). Although "akh" in ancient Egyptian means in one sense fitting, appropriate, it can also be translated as Maat as can all the Seven Cardinal Virtues. But if one word can sum up these virtues, it is righteousness or rightness--rightness in the divine, social and natural spheres.

Such an embracing ethic and concept of rightness is further defined by the word "akh" itself and its implications. It means effective, proper, fitting, but also agreeable, good, beneficial, excellent, right, glorious and <u>sacred</u>. Several things are worth noting here. First, the fitting is at the same time the right and the good. This recalls Niebuhr's aspiration to combine in one indicative-imperative concept and practice the teleological emphasis on achievement of the good and the deontological stress on doing what is right. Thus, in the <u>Book of Kheti</u> (47) Merikara is instructed that "righteousness is fitting for a ruler," and Ptahhotep (88 L2) says, "Maat is <u>akh</u>, (i.e., fitting, valuable, appropriate). It endures; it is effective." Again, righteousness is fitting and fittingness is righteous, effective and enduring.

Secondly, "akh's" meaning of agreeableness reflects its stress on "interrelatedness," "fitting in" and "harmony" which is key to Niebuhr's fittingness. Such stress on harmony and order was seen by many early Egyptologists as servility, but it can be posed as a classical African value growing out of the definition of the person, not as an isolated "individual," but as a person-in-community with no identity, relevance or rootedness outside it. Thirdly, "akh" reaffirms its rootedness in the ethic of responsibility, specifically in responsiveness to others by its use in the phrase "*3ḫ ib n* . . . ." This translates as "be serviceably

minded toward" or literally, "be of good, right and beneficial heart towards," a reflection of the stress on the ethic of service as a key mode of human responsiveness (Faulkner, 1981:4; Urk. IV:890.9).

Fourthly, "akh's" translation as sacred and Maat, indicates that fittingness, as concept and practice, includes an inextricable bond to the Divine and due concern for what it means to be in harmony with the will and way of the Divine. For, as indicated above, another way of saying Maat is "the Way of God," the "Divine Path," "Way of Life" or the "Good Way." Thus Sishu says, "Serving God is the good way," i.e., Maat (Lefebvre, 1923:83.4). Finally, one who has by her righteousness been given eternal life, is called "akh," a glorious spirit, triumphant and vindicated. Responsibility or responsiveness as a root-metaphor, then, is a fundamental mode of human moral existence in both Maatian and Niebuhrian ethics and serves as an essential analytical tool in delineating and explicating the ethical project.

8.1.8 Character and the Maatian Person

As a virtue ethics, Maatian ethics is an ethics concerned with building moral character and a moral community which sustains and is sustained by such character (Hauerwas, 1986, 1985; MacIntyre, 1981; Foot, 1978; Geach, 1977). The Declarations impose obligations of righteous thought, emotion, speech and conduct so that the Maatian person is cultivated through the development of character which in

turn is developed through moral instruction and practice. Thus, in Maatian ethics, instruction and learning are above all for a practical end, self-cultivation-in-community. As Ankhsheshonqi says, "It is in the development of character that instruction succeeds" (6,9). This means one is cultivated to do good and abstain from evil. In the DOI one is obligated: not to be arrogant, covetous, greedy, or quick-tempered, in order to cultivate the mind and emotions; not to lie, curse, argue,engage in quarrelling or be contentious, gossip, slander or talk overmuch, in order to cultivate restraint in speech; and not to demand more than what is due to one, mistreat others, kill, bring forth one's name for praise, be deceitful, cheat, steal, commit sexually harmful acts, stir-up strife, terrorize, use violence or be aggressive, in order to cultivate moral conduct.

Moreover, one is cultivated to do good by instruction in the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Maat: truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order. These are cardinal in that all of these categories can be and are translated in the sacred texts as Maat. Thus, to speak truth, do justice, act properly live in harmony, be balanced, practice reciprocity and recognize and respect the divine, social and natural order are all Maat. The thrust to cultivate the Maatian character, then, is a thrust to create a self-enriching process in which the Maatian person

and Maatian society, in a dynamic reciprocity, reinforce and sustain each other and foster each other's expansiveness.

Drawing on tradition and acting always as a person-in-community, the Maatian person seeks to develop character as an expression of and aid to moral agency. Thus, one talks of character which raised one high and of being one who made his/her character. By character I mean relatively stable dispositions which enables one to live a moral life and thus flourish as a human being and a member of a particular community. For in Maatian ethics and generally in African ethics, as Gyekye (1987) argues, well-being and well-doing are inextricably linked. Likewise, vices are those qualities which destroy or diminish the capacity for moral practice and the human flourishing it grounds and sustains.

But it is important to note that character is at once stable and constantly being formed and reaffirmed in practice. As Hauerwas (1985:21) notes, "the idea of character involves the assumption that the self can be determined, indeed, the self must be determined to act without losing itself through its determinations." Thus, when the ancient Egyptians say "*ink ir.i ḳd.f*," it can mean I am one who made his character, i.e, a relative stable disposition. Or it could also mean I am one who makes his character, i.e., I am engaged in a constant determination of my character without its losing its Maatian determinations.

It is this strong sense of agency which inform the Maatian concept of character and assumptions about virtue.

To cultivate character, virtues are stressed. Lichtheim (1992:152-153) lists several principal virtues in Maatian ethics including being: true, upright, honest, just, fair, patient, steadfast, thoughtful, self-controlled, competent and trustworthy. But as noted above, the cardinal virtues of Maat are those which most closely translate as Maat, i.e., truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order. Also, humbleness, service, generosity and wisdom are also important as enabling virtues in the quest to do and be good--(*iḳr, nfr, mnh* and *M3'ty*).

The words for character in Maatic ethical literature are numerous (i.e., *ḳd, bit, bi3t, sḫr, iwn*) and reflect a well-developed discourse on the subject. This discourse on character as a moral focus and concern emerges in ethical literature of the Old Kingdom. And it flourishes in the First Intermediate Period when the Egyptians begin to explore and define self-hood in the context of a general thrust toward exploration and creativity. In the Old Kingdom, the Sebait of Ptahhotep defines character as a thing of value, a monument and moral and social wealth. The text says:

> The character of a son of man is valuable
> (*3ḫ*) to him. (493)
> Good character is a memorial. (494)
> A possessor of character is possessor of
> wealth. (167)

This affirmation of the value of character or relation to a <u>son of man</u> is important. For a son of man is a person of socially noble birth and the text tends to suggest that nobility must not be simply a social status, but also a moral achievement and status.

The use of monument as a metaphor for good character reflects not only the Kemetic concern for being remembered, but also a developing sense, especially after the Old Kingdom, that character, service and love of the people were the most important monuments. Moreover, the definition of character as wealth is again an expression of increasing emphasis on ethical and spiritual qualities and values as an eternal and incomparable richness. The ethical centrality of character is also affirmed in the autobiographies. The prime minister Kagemni poses it as a witness against words of detraction. He tells would-be detractors: "do not speak evil against me to the king in falsehood. For the sovereign knows my character (*ḳd*) and conduct (*sšm*) (Urk. I:195). Good character thus is a person's true witness and a wall against those who would argue otherwise. Also, conduct is offered as both an expression and reaffirmation of character.

In the First Intermediate Period, character continues to be a key moral category and concern. Kheti defines character in his Sebait as a heavenly possession, saying: *pt pw nt s iwn nfr*--good character is a person's heaven (Merikara,

31). Contributing an expanding number of ways to describe the quality of character, the monarch Kheti I says: "I am one who is upright of character (*'ḳ3 bi3t*)" (Schenkel, 1965: no.57). Also in the autobiography of Count Indi, we encounter good character and conduct joined with desire and will. He says that he was raised "with the desire for (good) character and a will to act for the best" (Schenkel, 1965:no.260). Here we see a reflection of the Maatian emphasis on moral instruction and cultivation. Character and will are posed here as a product of a morally-directed rearing which is directed towards giving grounding for the development of a habitual disposition which seeks the best.

At the end of the First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, expanded concepts of personhood and agency emerge in the midst of a larger creative thrust. Self-concepts are centered around ideas of mind/heart (*ib*) and character (*kd*) as central shaping forces. One regularly defines oneself as a possessor (*nb, nbt*) of character (*ḳd, bit, bi3t*). Furthermore, one stresses agency by defining oneself as a maker of his or her character. Thus, both the steward Henuu (Schenkel, 1965: no.375) and the priest Rudjahau (Schenkel, 1965:no.495) say of themselves:

> *ink ỉr ḳd.f*
> *mrrw rmṯ m ẖrt-ḫrw nt r' nb*
>
> I am one who made his character
> One beloved of the people in the course
> of every day.

The texts suggest that in addition to being the result of instruction and cultivation, as noted above, character is also the fruit of a personal effort to mold and make oneself. This again speaks to the Maatian emphasis on human agency.

Certainly, one of the most definitive statements on the moral value of character is found in this period in the autobiographical text of Mentuhotep, count and overseer of the priests during the 11th Dynasty reign of Mentuhotep II, Nebhotepra (Goedicke, 1962). Mentuhotep says:

> The good character (*bit nfr*) of a man is worth more to him than a thousand gifts, in fact. For the witness of the people lies in that expression in the mouth of the people: the good character of a man is his monument. But the one who is evil of character (*bin bit*) is forgotten. (15-16)

Again, the stress is on character as a possession of great value, a monument and praise in the mouth of the people. It recalls the listing of good deeds which express good character and then the moral claim that "my whole town is my witness" as found in the autobiographical text of Neferyu (Schenkel, 1965:no.26).

In the Middle Kingdom, Lady Taniy (De Meulenaere, 1988: 69, Fig.1) begins her autobiography by saying, "*ink nb(t) bit ḫnty rḫyt*," I am a possessor of character, one who is at the head of the people." She is, she states, "valuable . . .by her Maat." The chief treasurer, Tjetji (Schenkel, 1965:103-107), defines himself as both a "person of character" and as "one who made his character." And Mentwoser

says he was sent forth because of his "strength of character--*mds bi3t*" (Les. 79:7). Rediu Khnum also defines himself as a "person of character" and links the heart/mind and character in a mutually interactive and beneficial way. He says, "It was my heart/mind that furthered my rank. It was my character that kept me in front--*in ib(.i) sḫnt st(.i) in ḳd(.i) rdi w3ḥ(.i) ḥ3t*" (Lange and Schäfer, 1908: 166.17).

Here, the heart/mind as the central seat of agency is joined with character in placing the agent in the forefront. Heart/mind thus represents reason and moral sensitivity, while character is the moral disposition that makes permanent one's achievement. In a Ramessid text, one reads that:

> *in ib s'š3 ḳdw*
> *sb3w ḳn r mšt bi3t*
>
> It is the heart which increases character.
> A strong teacher for shaping disposition.

The heart here, then, directs, enriches and expands character and serves as an excellent teacher in its construction and maintenance. Hauerwas (1985:115) has correctly noted that it is "by having reasons and forming our actions accordingly that our character is at once formed and revealed." Certainly, this is the role of the *ib* or heart/mind which not only provides reasons for good as mind, but also cultivates moral sensitivity as heart.

In his autobiography, the priest Mentuhotep (Lichtheim, 1988:pl.iv) describes himself as one whose "character (*sḫr*) replaced his mother at home" and as "father who said take

note son." Also, he states that he is "one beautiful of disposition (*ḳd*) who was taught by his character (*bi3t*) like a child grown up with a father." Here the character assumes a role of instruction usually assigned to the heart/mind. This again shows the interactive relationships of heart/mind and character. It also suggests that once character, a habitual disposition, is established, the possessor becomes self-directive through it. Note also how Mentuhotep uses three words for character, *sẖr*, which is usually used for nature and conduct, and the two more common words, *ḳd* and *bi3t*, thus demonstrating a rich vocabulary for discourse on character.

Finally, Coffin Text 27 (I.79) reveals character is the source of nobility rather than social status, saying: "It is your Maat which creates your power. It is your character (*sntt*) which makes you noble." *Sntt*, which literally means "foundation," is also a figurative word for "character" and "disposition" as noted above (Faulkner, 1973 I:17). The use of *sntt* not only adds to the list of words for character, but also speaks to the expansive nature of the discourse on the subject. Moreover, it reaffirms the foundational nature of character to the social and self-definition of the human person. It is at the same time a reflection of character as moral strength which Hartman (1963 II:287) defines as the capacity of "the person to speak for himself, to determine beforehand his future conduct not yet under his control,

therefore, to guarantee himself beyond the present moment." Character in this sense speaks to the ethical substance of a person and again is the foundation of one's social and self-definition.

In the New Kingdom, the basic understanding of character remains one of ethical foundation and agency. Thus, Paheri (Urk. IV:111-123) says, "*sʿr wi ḳd nfr*--my good character raised me high," and "I was summoned as one who was blameless." Also, Paheri makes a claim which is repeated in other moral self-presentations and which denies association with persons who lack character. He says, "I did not converse with persons who lacked character--*iwty ḳdw.sn*)." And the chief sculptor, Userhat, of the Ramessid period reaffirms this as an important moral claim saying, "*n sm3 ib.im dw-ḳd*--my heart/mind did not unite with one evil of character" (KRI I:361.6). Also, the priest, Ay, in the Amarna period noted in his moral self-presentation that he "was not lacking in character--*tm hd.i bit*" (Urk. IV:1997.16). The stress here is on avoiding those who lack character and being able to say, "I do not lack character" or more positively, "I am a person of character." Also, the high steward Duauernehehe reaffirms the moral and social agency which grounds nobility saying, "I am noble by what I have done" (Stewart, 1976: pl.15.8).

In the Late Period, the emphasis on character as a central moral concern and claim continued. Thus, the prime minister, Hor, says,

> *iw sw3ḥ.n.i mnw n bit nfr*
> *rḫ.n.i 3ḫ n ḥnty*
>
> I have erected a monument of good character
> For I knew it would be of value for eternity.
> (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:562.2-3)

Here again, character is both central to moral self-definition and a promise of reward for eternity. Later, in the period of Graeco-Roman domination, Lady Ta Shery-et-en-Aset says she was "celebrated for a character of the ideal pattern of Khnum," i.e., the Creator (Hodjash and Berlev, 1982:205ff). In a word, her character has a divine pattern of perfection. Likewise, Lady Ta-Aset says she is "wholesome of character (*w3ḏ ḳd*)" "and beautiful of disposition (*nfr bit*)." Her dual claim is for emphasis and reaffirms the centrality of character to her moral self-presentation.

Finally, in the Sebait of Ankhsheshonqi, the centrality of character is reaffirmed. Ankhsheshonqi equates character with a person's family, destiny and one of his limbs and states that it is reflected in his face. He says: "A man's character is his family. A man's character is his destiny. A man's character is one of his limbs" (11,11-14). Ankhsheshonqi appears to see character as a fundamental determinant of human destiny in that it determines capacity for a moral and meaningful life. He also poses it as a strong factor of human agency, giving weight to it as opposed to

fate. That character is a person's family indicates its role as companion and advisor. This role seems especially significant in a strange context, for Ankhsheshonqi says in another passage that for "a man who has no town, his character is his family" (18, 13). This reaffirms the importance of the family and communal context for moral development and sustained moral integrity and at the same time reemphasizes the significance of character as a substitute and expression of those.

Character, then, stands at the heart of Maatian ethics and evidences a continuity in relevance from the Old Kingdom through the Late Period. It is a testament to the ancient Egyptians belief in human agency and their capacity to shape their destiny and daily lives, that character played such a central and continuing role in their ethics. The thrust was to cultivate a Maatian person who was both an example and the embodiment of Maat. For as in other virtue or character-focused ethics, "the leading question concerns the best kind of individual life and qualities of character exhibited by the man who leads it" (Pincoffs, 1986:21).

In Maatian ethics, a person of character is a person of virtue. And virtue is first of all an ideal as expressed in Maat-doing. Thus one expresses moral self-understanding as a "person of Maat" or "a doer of Maat." In this context, Intef, son of Sitamun, defines himself as "*M3'ty iwty w'3, wn-ib r wḫdw sfnw, s-n-mty 'ḳ3-ib mnḫ sšrw*--a Maatian person

free of evil plotting, sensitive to those in pain and suffering, a man of rectitude, upright and virtuous in action" (Simpson, 1974:pl.10.9; Lichtheim, 1992:34). The prime minister, Mentuhotep, defines himself as "*sn-M3't ḫnt T3wy . . .si'r M3't r 'ḥ*--a man of Maat before Egypt . . . one who raises Maat up to the palace" (Lichtheim, 1992:35).

These self-definitions as a *M3'ty* or Maatian person is a clear statement of character and reaffirms its centrality in Maatian ethics. Groll (1992:68) defines the *M3'ty* as "one who belongs to truth," given its nisbe form. "Since *M3'ty* is a nisbe form of *M3't*, truth," she says, "the semantic conceptual meaning of *M3'ty* ranges from truth-telling to truth-dealing. Thus, the minimal unit, *M3'ty*, presupposes the modality of knowing, acting and loving truth by the subject-of-the-doing." Although Groll translates Maat here as truth, it obviously can also be translated as justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order as well as rightness, righteousness and related concepts. Moreover, the category *M3'ty* presupposes the modalities of thought, emotion, speech and conduct. And it is in these areas that the DOI offer guidelines for the Maatian life.

It is of value to state here that although ancient Egyptian ethics does not stress duty but rather virtue and character, they nevertheless saw duty as implied and necessitated by virtue. As Hauerwas (1986:114) contends, there

is a definite interrelationship between duty and virtue in our moral experience. In a word,

> the recognition and performance of duty is made possible because we are virtuous, and a person of virtue is dutiful, because not to be so is to be less than virtuous.

Thus, the ancient Egyptian recognizes and performs his or her duty because of the demands of character. A person of character (neb ked or nebet ked) does his or her duty but does more than that duty because their moral responsibility reaches beyond that. This is why the civil servants declare virtues which go beyond the call of minimum duty and repeatedly reflect declarations of superogation.

Likewise, Maatian ethics are not strictly consequentialist in their reasoning although it is clear that there is a concern for consequences in terms of relations with God, others and nature. Moreover, Maatian ethics are reflective of act consequentialism rather than rule consequentialism. What one witnesses here is a moral sensitivity to others and the consequences of one's acts on them, on one's relationship with them and ultimately on one's relationship with god. Therefore, Harkhuf explaining his virtuous conduct towards his family and fellow humans notes that not only did he want to please them but also he "wished to stand well with the Great God" (Urk. I:123.2). And similarly Nefer-Seshem-Ra also acted virtuously "so as to stand well with the people by it" (Urk. I:198.18). In each case above and in countless other Declarations of Virtue, the author is

concerned not to violate or vitiate his or her relations with significant others and fellow humans but also with God who requires Maat.

This moral sensitivity to the consequences of one's acts on others and the resultant effect on one's relationships with them is central. Alan Gardiner (1914:56) recognizes this central value but misinterprets it and dismisses it as a desire for a good name "naively blended with an intense desire for approval, and the over-anxiety to stand well with others." However, he also notes that in spite of the desire to stand well with the pharaoh, "it is interesting to note that popular verdict was held in high account." For, he says, in spite of the strong centralized government under the pharaohs, "the approval of fellow-men and public opinion in general was held in high esteem." This, of course, speaks highly of the ancient Egyptian respect for his/her fellow citizen and a respect which is key to any serious concept and practice of civic virtue. Certainly, there is no more important source of moral evaluation, support and development than one's community in Maatian ethics. For as noted above, this is the fundamental context for both moral conception and moral practice.

8.2 *Im3ḫ Ḫr Wnnt*--Worthiness Before Nature

8.2.1 Introduction

The concept of worthiness before nature evolves out of the concept the interrelatedness of moral worthiness in

every area of human life. The highest form of moral worthiness is always inclusive, that is to say, it enables the possessor to claim a Maatian standing in the major areas of moral consideration. Thus, to stand worthy before God means and requires worthiness in relation to and before others and nature. Here one seeks a unity of a whole life and an excellence (*iḳr*) in every area of moral concern. The proposition that to be a truly Maatian person, one must stand worthy before God, others and nature is not only supported in the texts but is also rationally consistent with the meaning of Maat, itself. For Maat is an order of interrelated existence including the divine, the social and the natural (Morenz, 198:113; Anthes, 1954:23; Allen, 1989:26).

For the Maatian person, Maat is the principle, substance and practice which binds all things together. And it is an order in which all things are bound together. Moreover, humans are embedded in this order with its divine, social and natural aspects. In their identity as children and images of God, humans belong to the divine; in their identity as social beings, they belong to society, and in their identity as living beings they belong to nature. Thus, one must seek after Maat (*pẖr m-s3 m3ʿt*) in each of these areas and stand justified and worthy because of moral practice in each of these areas. This requirement is attested to as early as the Pyramid Texts in which King Unas claimed worthiness before God by claiming Maatian practice

and thus, worthiness before both humans and nature--in this case, bird and beast. He says in his justification:

n srḫw ʿnḫ ir Wnis
n srḫw mt ir Wnis
n srḫw st ir Wnis
n srḫw gn ir Wnis (PT 386ab)

No one living accuses Unas
No one dead accuses Unas
No bird accuses Unas
No beast accuses Unas.

Note again, how inclusive his claims are including the living and the dead, humans and animals.

The Kemetic concept of nature is clearly evidenced in the prayers and sacred praises (hymns) to the Creator. In these texts, the words *nty* and its feminine form, *ntt*, which means "that which exists" approximate what we term nature (Wörterbuch, II,354.1-2; I,310.4-5). For in its most inclusive sense, the word nature signifies "the sum total of all things in time and space, the entire physical universi-ty" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1982:948). This definition of nature is reflected in the description of the Creator as:

(1) *ir nty ḳm3 wnnt*

He who made what is
And created what exists
(pHarris I:350.3,3; Roveri, 1967:117.1)

(2) He who
m rn.f n ḫpri ir ntt

in his name of Khepri created what is
(Urk. IV:385.6)

and

(3) wꜥ ir ntt ḳm3 wnnt

Unique one who made what is
And created what exists.
(Urk. IV:495.4)

Certainly, then, that which is and exists is another way of saying, all things in time and space--in a word, the entire physical universe.

The use of *ntt* and *wnnt* together is a parallelism of emphasis and is similar to phrases in English such as "aid and abet" or "cease and desist." The function of this repetition of synonymous categories is to emphasize a specific action. These categories may also be emphasized by use of the qualifier *nb (nbt)* which means "all" and has both singular and plural forms. Thus, Ra is described as:

ir ḏww sḫpr ḫ3swt
ir nty nb wnnt nb

He who created the mountains and brought
the hill countries into being
He who created all that is and all that
exists. (KRI V:406.6)

Also, the Wörterbuch II (354.6) offers among its examples of this usage "*ir ntt nb*" (Kairo 42231) and "*ir nty nb*" (Karnak 985), i.e., "one who created all that is" in the feminine and masculine forms.

Although *ntt (nty)* and *wnnt* clearly suggest a spiritual as well as physical dimension, they nevertheless speak most definitively to the fact of a physical reality, i.e., a physical creation. However, in Kemetic thought, as well as other African thought, a clear line of demarcation between

the spiritual and the physical is not drawn (Morenz, 1984:6ff). Thus all that is and exists, of necessity, includes the physical <u>and</u> the spiritual. But even recognizing this, these categories contain a definite physical meaning and are clearly used to describe the creation of the physical world. Given this, the use of *ntt* and *wnnt* to denote nature, i.e., an essentially physical world with a spiritual dimension, does not violate the range of conceptual possibilities of the terms.

On the contrary, the physical dimension of the creation is most often stressed in the texts describing the creation. The Creator creates divinities and other spiritual aspects of existence, but clearly the greatest number of things he creates are physical, i.e., people, animals, birds, water, wind, mountains, trees, plants, heaven, earth, etc. Thus, we read of the Creator that he is:

> Ra who fashioned the heaven
> Who created the earth
> Who created water and the mountains
> And who brought into being (*sḫpr*) all
> that exists (pBerlin 3049, VIII.2)

Or again, we read concerning the Creator that he is;

> Lord of Heliopolis who created heaven and earth
> Who brought forth humanity
> Who created everything through the speech of
> his mouth
> Great One, who created divinities and people
> Who came into being as the Unique One
> Who brought forth himself as millions.
> (Assmann, 1983:47-48)

This last line refers to the conception of creation as a broadening out of the Creator and his creating the creation

out of the diversification of himself. And the millions he creates are essentially the physical components of the world, i.e., all things in time and space.

In this same vein Ra is lauded as:

ir rmṯ ḳm3 'wt
nb nty
ḳm3 ḫt n 'nḫ

He who made people and created animals
Lord of what is
He who created the fruit tree.
(Hassan, 1930:158)

The meaning of the term "*ḫt n 'nḫ*" is ambiguous and it can mean both "the tree of life," as it indicates literally, or it can mean "fruit tree" as I have translated it here following Hassan (1930:158-159). Gardiner (1905:39,n.3) suggests that it is "perhaps, a generic term for all vegetation on which life depends." As Gardiner notes in a Hymn to Amen (Cairo), this term appears twice describing Amen as "Lord of what is, creating *ḫt n 'nḫ*" (I,6-7) and "making grass (*smw*) for cattle and *ḫt n 'nḫ* for humankind" (VI,3-4). In any case, the point here is that vegetation fits clearly in the physical dimension of creation and the passages here and above reaffirm the fact that creation is most often posed in physical terms. Thus, netet and wennet can be legitimately used to denote nature as the entire physical universe, all things which exist in time and space.

There is, however, a more inclusive term for the creation which is used in Kemetic literature. The term is *ntt iwtt* and literally means "what is and what is not" and

connotatively means "all" (Wb II,354.10; Gardiner, 1982:153. 4). The Wörterbuch uses the phrase describing the Creator as "*nb r ḏr . . .irw ntt iwtt*--Lord of the Universe . . .who created what is and what is not." Also, in the Leiden Hymn to Amen (I350) he is described as "*ms ntt iwtt*--giving birth to what is and what is not" (5,3). This term, however, is more inclusive than is useful for a concept of nature. For it includes "what is not" and thereby indicates an ontological and theological concept outside of nature.

As Hornung (1982:172ff) notes, the non-existent is the undifferentiated and that which is not a part of the ordered world, that is to say, it is beyond the Maat-grounded order of things. And because it is beyond the limits of Maatian boundaries, the risen one at the judgment after death says, "I do not know what does not exist" (A4). For this is an affirmation "that he is someone who has stayed within the boundaries of order and hence the existent and has not overstepped the limits that have been laid down" (Hornung, 1982:181). A longer discussion of how the Creator created that which is not is beyond the scope of this work. But if one sees the whole term "that which is and that which is not" as simply a metaphor for the creation of all things, a significant part of the problem is solved. For in this case, it is used to indicate the all-powerfulness and all pervasiveness of the Creator and his creativity. But in its ontological meaning as the non-existent, its reach is beyond

the ordered, Maatian world and thus beyond the concrete and conceptual reach of what we understand in Maatian thought as nature.

The term I am using for nature, again, then, is *wnnt* or wenent which translates as all things in time and space, in a word, the entire physical universe. In its inclusiveness it reaffirms human embeddedness in nature as opposed to being separate from it which a more narrow definition would suggest. In fact, in the hymns of praise to the Creator, he is praised as he who created (*ḳm3*) or gave birth to (*msy*) to all that exists (*wnnt* or *ntt*) (Gardiner, 1905).

8.2.2 The Interrelatedness of Existence

It is this sense of unity of being that forms the first ground for a Maatian environmental ethics. The natural ethical concerns of Maatian ethics, then, flow first from the concept of a holistic universe, an inclusive order founded on and sustained by Maat. Ancient Egyptians had the highest respect for nature and felt and expressed a kinship with it. To the ancient Egyptian, Maat was the unifying principle that bound all together, from the star to humans, to the fish in the sea and the chick in the egg, fleas, worms, in a word--all that is. Thus, in a hymn to Amen Ra from the 18th Dynasty before the reign of Akhenaton, we read:

> O Ra . . .your love is in the southern sky
> Your pleasantness is in the northern sky
> - - - - - - - -
> You are the Unique One who made all that is

The sole and only one who made what exists
From whose eyes humans came forth
And from whose mouth the divine ones came
into being
The one who creates the herbage that
nourishes the animals
And the fruit trees for humankind
Who makes that on which fish in the river
live
And the birds under heaven
Who give air to what is in the egg
And nourishes even the young snake
Who makes that on which gnats live
And likewise worms and flies
Who supplies the needs of mice in their
holes
And nourishes flying things in every tree.
- - - - - - - -
Honor to you because you created us
Hail to you because of all cattle
Jubilation to you because of all foreign
lands
To the height of heaven, to the width of
earth and the depths of the sea
- - - - - - - -
One who raised the heaven and laid out
the earth
Who made what exists and created what
will be. (Gebraut, 1874:pl.vi,1-7)

This praise poem to Ra reflects the monistic ontology discussed in chapter IV and with other similar and related texts offer a rich source of materials from which to understand the Kemetic conception of the oneness of being. Finnestad (1989a:31) has observed that in this holistic ontology "there appears to be no essential ontological separation (there is a conceptual distinction) between species - human beings, animals, vegetation, and cosmic constituents." For in Maatian ontology the stress is on affinities and connections, as Finnestad argues. Moreover, as he contends, this ontology "defines a human being as an

entity of life belonging to life total, temporarily manifested as a particular body of being, but in essence not separated from other bodies of being." Thus "on this biotic level there is a relationship of close connection between man and the world." And unlike dominant thought in modern European philosophy, the Egyptians "connect human beings and animals, (and) . . .animate phenomena with inanimate phenomena such as sun, moon, earth, water, plants."

This ontology stems from the idea of a God both immanent in and transcendent of his creation as expressed in the Shabaka Text (Junker, 1940). It also is rooted in the conception of creation found in Coffin Text 80 which poses Maat as the foundation of existence and in The Book of Knowing the Creations (16.21ff) which conceives of the world as evolving from the Creator who broadened out (*wsḫ*), differentiated himself and thus created or rather evolved (*ḫpr*) the world from himself. This conception offers similarities to a modern scientific concept of nature which poses both humans and nature as evolving from similar substance. Especially close then are organic beings which are co-evolved and interdependent as the praise poems to the Creator suggest. This unity of being concept with its stress on nature as a biotic organism, a living web of interconnections and mutual effect coincides in a meaningful way with the ecological metaphor of "biotic community." Thus Maatian ethics will, of necessity, direct moral

attention to the welfare of nature which means respect for and defense of its integrity, diversity and stability.

8.2.3 Stewardship and Filial Obligation

A second philosophical ground for a Maatian environmental ethics in the general framework of Maatian ethics is the stewardship concept first advanced in the Sebait of Kheti for his son Merikara. The text reads:

> Well-cared for is humankind the herd of God
> He made heaven and earth for their sakes
> He subdued the dangers of the water
> He made breath for their noses to live
> They are his images and come from his body
> He shines in the sky for their sakes
> He made plants and cattle for them
> Fowl and fish to nourish them
> He makes daylight for their sakes
> And he sails by to see them
> He has built a shrine around them
> And when they weep he hears.
> (Merikara, 130-135)

Here one sees an explicit divine care for humans. They are in his image and came from his body. Thus, he loves and cares for them, constantly watches over them as a Good Shepherd, as discussed above, and has built a shrine around them.

Moreover, God has made plants, cattle, fish and fowl for human nourishment. And although this seems to be an exclusive gift for humans, it is not. For in other texts quoted above, God makes provisions for all he has created and brought into being. Therefore, the Great Hymn to Amen Ra says "*msy.f ntt rd.f 'nḫ.sn*--He created all that exists. He caused them to live" (Gardiner, 1905:31; pLeiden, IV:7-

8). Or again in another hymn to Amen Ra which is similar to the one quoted above, he is described as "the one who gives the breath of life to those who are in the egg (i.e., humans and birds) who keeps human beings and birds alive, who makes food for mice in their holes and even for worms and fleas" (Scharff, 1922: 73ff.H8-9). The Creator, thus cares for the whole creation even worms and fleas. Moreover, humans are discussed in the general structure of nature as fellow members of the biotic community. So, even though humans are clearly special as images of God, all creatures indeed all living things share in Ra's care and concern.

Thus, there is no passage in Maatian ethics which approximates the Judaic-Christian concept of God's command to humans to "subdue" the earth "and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28). It is interesting, however, that in both the Kemetic text of Kheti (130-135) and the later Hebrew text of Genesis (1:26-27), one finds both the concept of humans in the image of God and the textual basis for stewardship. In the Kemetic text, humans are given the bountifulness of the earth and heaven for sustenance. But unlike in the Hebrew text, they are not told to have dominion (rada--tread on, tramp down) or subdue (kabas--stamp down) nature. Clearly, humans are given a special status in Maatian texts but in related texts they are always mentioned in the context of the Creator's

concern for all living things. And it is this care and concern by the Creator for all living things including fleas and worms that poses a model for the Maatian valuing not only human life but all life (Kleinig, 1991).

Again, the numerous hymns to the Creator provide us with a rich and varied intellectual resource for understanding and drawing out of the texts a Maatian environmental ethics. For they balance the Kheti text which confers on humans a special status, placing them in the midst of nature and discussing them along with birds, animals, plants, worms, fleas, fish and other living beings. Certainly, one of the most important constitutive elements of a credible environmental ethics is the concept of kinship with and in nature. This means accepting the fact that human beings are embedded in and one with nature. And Maatian ethics does this.

It is this context of a balanced position which places humans in the midst of nature that the Maatian concept of stewardship evolves. In this context, one perceives not only kinship with all living things, but also a shared interest with them. Moreover, one feels at home in the world in the midst of nature. Likewise, one concentrates not simply on the special status of humans, but on the interrelatedness with all that exists, especially all living things and humans' special duties and responsibilities which derive from this special status.

Maatian stewardship is best understood as filial obligation to care, i.e., what a loving son or daughter does for one's parent. What is given must be cared for and passed on. Humans stand in the midst of a world which they are a apart of, and in which they share an origin and common substance with all modalities of being. For all that exists (*wnnt*) emanates from the Creator who broadens out, invests himself in the construction of existence, and brings being into being and then all other beings thereafter (Book of Knowing the Creations, 26.21ff). Tu Wei-Ming (1985:45) has suggested a conception in his vision of nature which contains the fundamental "idea of forming one body with the universe." In such a context heaven and earth become our mother and father. And "the image of the human that emerges here, far from being the lord of creation, is the filial son and daughter of the universe." Within this conceptual framework, stewardship is translated as filial piety which "connotes a profound feeling and all-pervasive care for the world around us."

The Kemetic texts clearly contain the theoretical basis for such a conception of filial piety towards nature as outlined in chapter VI. Hatshepsut says that she is the "effective image of the Lord of the Universe . . .whom he chose as guardian of Egypt, as protector of (both) the nobles and the masses . . .who Ra begot so as to have an effective offspring on earth for the well being of humankind

(Urk. IV:361.6ff). Here filial obligation and piety are expressly stated. One is to be "*3ḫ*," effective, useable, serviceable for the Lord of the Universe. This serviceableness to him is explicitly defined as insuring the well-being of humankind, but implicitly the well-being of Egypt and humankind involves and requires the well-being of nature.

Moreover, Amenhotep says of Amen Ra that he "created my goodness and appointed me as shepherd of this land, knowing I would rule it for him." This too carries with it an implicit concern for nature. For again, the well-being of the people is clearly linked to and a part of the well-being of nature. Furthermore, in acting like Ra (*irt mi R'*), one is compelled to show a similar concern and care for nature. This would include at a minimum care for the environment and for every living thing, a valuing of life in a broad and profound way (Kleinig, 1991).

Within this framework, then, one cares for the earth as legacy in the Khetian sense as a dutiful son or daughter would care for a parent's legacy. Therefore the phrase "I have done or made this with a loving heart as an effective or profitable son does for his father" (Breasted, 1905:218). It is the intimacy of exchange in a relational context which distinguishes this from the stewardship which sees nature as a alien and distant reality. Here on the contrary is a legacy of one's family to be kept and cared for as a dutiful

and profitable (*3h*) son or daughter would do for his or her parent. Also, this concept of filial obligation is further strengthened by Maatian holistic ontology and anthropology which places humans as an integral part of the world. Therefore, a person acts towards the environment as a respectful son or daughter, organically linked in a web of interconnections and reciprocal effects. This obligation to care is expressed especially in relationship to animals.

In some texts of the DOI, Declaration A2 reads, "I have not mistreated beasts (cattle)." The word *wndyt* for cattle is often mistaken or substituted for *wndwt*, kin, others, associates. But we do have in the DOI the need to declare one's innocence of mistreating animals. In fact, humane treatment of animals has been a long and emphasized ethical obligation of ancient Egyptians. As early as the Pyramid Texts, we discover that part of the righteousness the departed kings claimed was not having mistreated even animals. As seen in the quote above, Unas claims innocence from offense to man, woman, bird or beast (PT 386ab). It is a declaration of moral purity which is necessary to his judgment and justification for eternal life.

Also Piankhi's Victory Text likewise shows a strong sensitivity to care for animals. Upon seeing the mistreated animals in a stable left by his fleeing opponent, Piankhi declares:

> I swear as Ra loves me and as my nose is refreshed by life that my horses were made to

> hunger, pains me more than any other crime you committed in your recklessness. [I would teach you to respect your neighbors.] (Urk. III:21.65--22.66-67).

Also, nomarch Kheti II lists as one of his virtues in his moral self-presentation that he "was kind to the cow . . ." (BAR I:189). Moreover, Henqu says in times of famine he not only fed humans, but also: "satisfied the wolves of the mountain and the fowls of heaven . . ." with food (BAR I: 126).

The principle here is that humans are interrelated with nature and especially other living beings. Therefore, one should do good by them and avoid behavior that tends to diminish or damage the humanity of the person him/herself. The stress, then is on respect for nature and its various parts - land and water, birds and animals, for several reasons: 1) because it is an ethical obligation to preserve the world entrusted to us; 2) because damage to it or its parts damages us in some important way; and 3) because to damage nature is not only to deprive ourselves of a sustainable environment, but also deprive future generations of one.

Maatian ethics does not in any way offer an animal and nature rights argument that equates human rights with animal interests or nature's claims on our respect (Menkiti, 1984) This is clearly shown in Djedi's willingness to substitute the goose for the prisoner in the narrative on human dignity. But it is an ethics which sees a vital relation-

ship between nature and humans that requires the respect for both and rejects thoughtless, uncaring and irresponsible behavior which threatens both human life and the environment.

8.2.4 The Shared Heritage

It is this context of interrelatedness and filial obligation that one has another understanding of the world as a shared heritage which all are obligated to care for and not damage. Coffin Text 1130 records the Creator's statement concerning this gift to all humankind which are called the Four Good Deeds of Ra Of the Four, two are the gifts of nature, equally and to all. He says:

> I made the four winds so that every person
> might breathe therefrom in his time
> I made the great floods so that the humble
> person might benefit from it like the
> great.

Thus, Ra gives the breath of life and the waters of the Nile for all, great and small so that they might benefit from them in their time. The other Two Good Deeds are: 1) equality and free will, and 2) religious consciousness.

This text parallels and supports Kheti's text and reaffirms the world as a shared heritage which is for the benefit of all. It is in this context that one is obligated in the Declarations of Innocence to be able to claim that s/he has: not held back water in its season (A31), not damned water when it should flow (A32), not put out a fire when it should burn (A33) and not waded in water (B36). For

all of these acts violate the right of others to the shared heritage of nature and represents an individualistic self-centered concern rather than a Maatian other-directed and communitarian ethics.

As recent literature tells us, the world, as a common ecological environment, is currently under several kinds of pressure, including the problems of pollution of air, water and soil, and depletion of other natural resources. The threats to the environment not only affect the possibilities of future generations, but the very existence of the world as we know it (Meredith, 1982). Clearly, an ethics that links life in a holistic framework and makes it morally compelling to respect both the social and the natural is needed (Lovelock, 1979; Regan, 1981). Maatian ethics stresses such a holistic approach, positing an indestructible unity of the Divine, social and natural. It is, even in its ancient form, committed to a just, good and righteous order in the social and natural realm. From this, one can evolve a social and environmental ethics which are interrelated and interdependent (Worster, 1979). In fact, the obligation to preserve the environment for ourselves and future generations derives from the same ethics to preserve and promote human life and development. For it compels us not to do anything which would deny or diminish the chances for a full and fulfilling life for each and every person.

It is thus unethical in a Maatian sense, to destroy or damage nature, for it eliminates or diminishes chances for a full and fulfilling human life. Moreover, it violates a trust posed in the concept of responsible trusteeship of the profitable and effective son and daughter as well as the ontological principle of unity of being. Therefore, when we pollute the seas with waste and oil spillage, destroy wilderness areas and rain forests for profit, poison air and water, in Maatian ethical thought we violate a divine and human trust. It violates also the obligation posed in the Declarations of Innocence not to be arrogant and assume the earth exists simply for human utility for the moment with no thought of what it means to animal and plant life or future generations. This is anthropocentrism at its worse, a self-centeredness that is not only detrimental to nature, but in the end also to the reckless, destructive and uncaring person which it creates (Callicot, 1984).

The need, then, is for an ethical sensibility that in its responsiveness recognizes the demands and limits of nature and the obligation to share it responsibly with others and refuses to exploit it for superficial wants of consumerism while other human beings lack vital necessities. Moreover, such an ethics militates against using the earth as if it were private property rather than a truly human heritage to be shared through just distribution and respon-

sible use of resources. For as Kheti teaches, the earth is indeed a shared heritage.

8.2.5 Restoration

Also, modern Maatian ethics finds philosophical grounds for an environmental ethics in the moral obligation of restoration or serudj which was discussed in Chapter VI. As noted above, restoration was not simply a physical act but a spiritual and moral act contributing to the healing and restoration of the world. Thus, again and again we read as in the Declarations of Virtue of Rediu Khnum who asserts as one of his key virtues the virtue of restoration saying: "I restored (*srwḏ*) that which I found ruined (*wsṯ*); I joined (*ṯs*) that which I found severed (*fdk*), and I replenished (*mḥ*) that which I found lacking (*i3ṯ*)." (Lange and Schafer, 1908 II:165.13--166.14). The conceptual thrust, then, of *srwḏ* or serudj is to restore, repair, to make new again, so that as Hatshepsut says, "there shall never be the destruction of what Amun has commanded" (*n ḫpr ḥdit wḏ.n 'Imn*). And this command in the widest sense is Maat and Maat is the existential substance as argued in Chapter IV which unites the world in its oneness and reflects, grounds and requires rightness in the world.

Again, this principle of restoration, serudj, as a key concept in Maatian ethics appears in the autobiography of Khnumhotep. He says:

m it ḥm.f
dr.f isft

ḫ‘ m Tm ḏs.f
smn.t gmt.n.f wsṯ
iṯit niwt m snty.f
di.f rḫ niwt t3š.s r niwt
smnḫ wḏw.sn mi pt
rḫ mw.sn r ntt m sšw
sip r ntt m iswt
n ‘3t n mrr.f M3‘t (Urk. VII:27.8-17)

Now his Majesty came
that he might remove isfet
He appeared as Atum, himself
He restored that which he found in ruins
And that which one city had seized from
its neighbor
He caused each city to know its boundary
to the other
He established their landmarks like heaven
He distinguished their waters as it was
in the writings
Assigning (them) as it was in ancient times
Because he loved Maat so.

Here the moral, social and natural are linked and the concept of restoration is central to this process.

Finally, even in the Late Period, the priest Petosiris reaffirms the ethical aspect of restoration, saying:

I made magnificent what I found ruined in
its place
I restored what was damaged long ago
And was no longer in its place.
(Lefebvre, 1923 II:55.45-46).

The term serudj, then, is a key ethical term with both social and environmental implications. For it means as an ethical obligation to raise up and restore that which is in ruins; to repair that which is damaged; to rejoin that which is severed; to replenish that which is lacking; to strengthen that which is weakened; to set right that which is wrong and to make flourish that which is insecure and underdeveloped.

Also, within the relationship of reciprocity between God and humans, the obligation of cooperative creation or co-creative practices emerges as an expression of serudj. It is a practice directed toward preserving, establishing and restoring Maat in the world. It is achieved in both the ritual and ethical practice of offering Maat. But it is most definitively an ethical practice. This Maat-doing is made more urgent by its role in preserving and nourishing the world and all the beings in it. It is this practice which not only links God and humans in a relationship of reciprocity, but also in a cooperative project which determines the course, character and content of creation. This project emanates from a series of assumptions about creation, especially its rootedness in Maat as both a principle and practice, a practice which is ongoing and creative. Thus, the ancient Egyptians speak of creations rather than the creation, because that which has been created must be constantly reaffirmed, restored and expanded. In a word, it must be constantly achieved as it was the first time (*st tpy*).

This first time refers to the first creation as discussed in chapter V on ontology. The essential act of creation is putting Maat in place (Hornung, 1988:390ff). This act becomes the paradigmatic act of life--spiritual, ethical and physical, social, natural and divine and one is compelled to participate in its repetition. Moral life thus

becomes a kind of repetition of creation, a perpetual restoration of that which is right in the fullest sense of the word and in all spheres. It is also a constant destruction of evil. Therefore, the righteous ruler as representative of God on earth, constantly declares that he has emulated the Creator and put Maat in the place of isfet.

Thus, as noted above, the Pyramid Texts (1975b) say, "Heaven is at peace and earth is in joy. For they have heard that King N has set Maat (right, order) in the place of isfet (disorder)." And it is written in the Restoration Text of Tutankhamun that he "drove isfet from the Two Lands and Maat is firmly established in its place. He made lying (*grg*) an abomination and the land is as it was at the first time" (Urk. IV:2026). Moreover, Neferti states that in the midst of the chaos which he is describing, "a king will come from the South, Ameni, the justified, by name. Son of a woman of Ta-Seti and child of Upper Egypt" who will suppress the traitors and rebels, and subdue the Asiatics and Libyans. "Then Maat (order) will return to its seat and isfet (chaos) will be driven out" (Neferti, 68-69).

The point here is that Maat had to be preserved and restored, and that humans were morally compelled to participate in the process. As Quirke (1992:70) states, "Only this framework of Right caused to exist and raised to the Creator could provide the space in which human beings might in their turn participate in the task of preserving the cosmos by

saying and doing right." Also, it is significant that it is stated that Amenemhet "drove out isfet by appearing as Atum (the Creator) himself" (Urk. VII:27). For it reaffirms the moral imperative to act like the Divinity in being creative and establishing Maat. It is a point I have developed in the section above on Maatian anthropology in which I argued that being in God's image imposes a burden of emulation.

Both Morenz and Hornung see Maat as a personal and collective ethical task. Morenz (1984:114) contends that in ancient Egypt "each individual participated in Maat--in other words, that Maat had to be preserved not only by the king for the entire community, but also by each individual in the community, even for his own sake." This, of course, is the fundamental lessons of the Sebait (Instructions) which both pose the task and promise of reward. As Ptah-hotep teaches, the Maatian person prospers, or in modern language flourishes, by walking in the ways of Maat, but those who oppose it are punished. Moreover, Tobin (1987: 113) stressing the social function of Maat-doing notes that:

> Justice in earthly affairs does not occur of its own volition. Rather, it must be accomplished by the voluntary actions of man who is expected to act in accordance with the righteous order laid down and demanded by Maat.

Thus, Maat is both the righteous order and the moral practice necessary and required to maintain and develop it.

Hornung (1988:390) maintains that it is in the First Intermediate Period that this stress on speaking and doing

Maat as an act of co-creation emerges. And this meant essentially "doing the right and rational thing." He accepts Schmid's (1968:51) contention that "world order is basically created and realized" and argues that this is accomplished through "right behavior and active engagement." Thus, in contradiction with Frankfort's (1961:70) concept of "frictionless integration," he maintains that in Egypt what mattered was "not simply to passively join in, follow and respect a preordained order, but rather to install and create it anew, to actively realize it." This, of course, has a tremendously important moral meaning in terms of the promise of Maatian ethics in modern times with regard to personal and collective responsibility.

Hornung's contention also raises important questions concerning Frankfort's concept of "frictionless integration." Immediately one must ask how does one frictionlessly integrate and yet not passively follow the preordained order? It seems that perhaps this can be best handled by realizing that both positions have merit in the Kemetic worldview. And the key to resolving the tension between the two is to use a phrase from Frankfort (1961) to pose them in "a dynamic equilibrium" with each playing its role in the Kemetic worldview. Thus, there is no need to dismiss one position and choose the other as definitive of the Kemetic worldview. For in fact they both are definitive and the existence of these two seemingly contradictory positions

actually represent a dialectic central to both Maatian discourse and practice.

In conclusion, then, the cooperative project of creation shared by God and humans is rooted in the concept and practice of Maat. As Hornung (1982:215ff) states, Maat which came from God at the time of creation returns to him from humans. "It symbolized the partnership of God and man" in the cooperative task of maintaining and constantly restoring the world, and also as the texts say, making it better and more beautiful than before, i.e., serudj (Lefebvre, 1929b:33.9-11; Petrie, 1898:pl. XV.13-14).

8.2.6 Obligations to the Future

Finally, a Maatian ethic of worthiness before nature requires us to preserve nature for future generations. It argues that posterity has a right to enjoy the bounty of earth. Here it is important to note the stress speaking Maatian ethics places on doing good for future generations in the context of living a moral life worthy of immortality and eternal memory. Ptahhotep speaking on teaching and listening says that giving good advice "is teaching a man to speak to posterity" and he states "it is good to speak to posterity" (Lichtheim, 1975:73). Moreover, Kheti says, "it is good to work for the future" and that "everyday is a donation to eternity and even one hour is a contribution to the future" (see Lichtheim, 1975:100, 102). Moreover, Ineni says: "I sought after (good) for those of the future. It

was a work of my own heart/mind. It was a conscious act" (Urk. IV:57.15-17). Inherent in these assertions is a due concern for the future which provides grounds for an environmental ethics of preservation and obligation to future generations.

Within this moral conceptual framework, then, to pollute and poison the earth, air and water, to deplete nonrenewable resources of the planet is to erode the quality of human life for the future and therefore violate the rights of future generations. Likewise, within such a moral understanding and concern, the nuclear and industrial technology which threaten the earth also threaten future generations as well as those living now and violate the Maatian injunction to be concerned for the future. Here the virtue of justice is required also for nature, ourselves and others, including future generations. For as Warren (1982: 149) argues that under what some ethical philosophers call the person-affecting principle "whenever we can reasonably predict that our actions will have a significant impact upon the interests of others, then we should take due account of that impact." Likewise, in Maatian ethical thought it is morally unjustifiable to disregard the predictable effects of irresponsible and uncaring behavior towards the environment on future generations. In fact, Maatian ethics argue that the very existence of future generations depends on the ethical character and behavior of persons alive now.

It is, thus, morally compelling that Maatian persons strive to limit damage to the earth, curtail and end wasteful consumerism, and respect the claims of nature--animate and inanimate--on humankind. As the ancient Egyptians taught, if we wish to live for eternity, we must build for eternity. And, again, as Kheti (Lichtheim, 1975:102) taught, "Everyday is a donation to eternity and even one hour is a contribution to the future." Thus, the priest Nakhtefmut says:

> I was a great one in his city, a protector of his family, one who humbled himself to his equal as well as to one of lower status. For I knew that the results of a good deed is a storehouse which one's children will find afterwards. (Jansen-Winkeln, 1985 II:456.21-22).

Again, it is reaffirmed here that Maat-doing is an eternal good, one that not only establishes and maintains moral community for those in the present, but serves as a storehouse from which future generations can draw. And the variety of goods in this storehouse are of a divine, social and natural character interlinked in an unbreakable bond of mutuality and meaning.

IX

SUMMARY

The category and conception of Maat has long been recognized as the heart and foundation of ancient Egyptian ethics. Moreover, its rich and varied meanings have likewise been cited and explored. However, although there has been much discourse on the role and aspects of Maat as a divine power, there has been less of such discussion on Maat as the basis for an ethical philosophy. The central thrust of this dissertation has been to examine the ancient ethical texts of Kemet from a contemporary perspective in order to reconstruct the Maatian tradition with an eye toward revealing its capacity for and potential contribution to modern moral discourse. Pursuing the project, I have sought to delineate the rich and varied ethical meanings of the concept of Maat, using the Declarations of Innocence as the central point of departure, while showing conceptual precedent, parallel and reaffirmation in other ethical texts. Within this dual interpretive focus, Maat is posed

as the philosophical ideal and the Declarations as an ideal conception of the moral practice within this framework. I have attempted to show that the Declarations are an evolved summary of the major ethical concerns of ancient Egypt which appear in more or less standard form in the New Kingdom. The ancient Egyptian category for the general guide to moral conduct was "*w3t nt M3't*" (the way of Maat) and the Declarations of Innocence evolved as a specific guide within this way of life.

Because discipline orthodoxy has usually assigned studies on Egypt to Egyptology, I stated at the outset that this work is not a work in Egyptology. On the contrary, it is a work whose essential thrust was to offer alternatives to some common Egyptological understandings of ancient Egyptian ethics as well as some of their modes of articulation and the unannounced assumptions held by Egyptologists which have grounded and shaped their assumptions. Especially does this project differ from Egyptological studies in its thrust to present and discuss the ancient Egyptian moral ideal as a valuable ethical tradition capable of engagement in modern moral discourse, and not as an essentially mythic or cultic project of little ethical value as is often argued in Egyptological literature. As a reconstructive project, the work attempts to explore the possibilities of genuine philosophic reflection within the renewed Maatian tradition on issues central to moral philosophy. Moreover, I have

clearly written from the contemporary Maatian tradition and thus, categories and conceptualization reflect this.

To accomplish this project, I divided my discussion into four basic areas of philosophic reflection, Maatian theology, ontology, anthropology and social practice. Using the Declarations of Innocence as the primary focus for such reflection, I attempted to show their rootedness in other ethical texts, especially the Sebait and the Declarations of Virtue which both preceded and succeeded them, representing both evolution and continuity. The central themes of Maatian theology were posed as judgment, justification and immortality based on righteousness, i.e., Maat, which evolved in the ancient Pyramid Texts and are reaffirmed in the Sebait and Declarations of Virtues. It was shown that in these Old Kingdom texts are ethical ideas which later appear in the New Kingdom texts, especially the Declarations of Innocence and focus on obligations to God, humans and nature. In addition to the Sebait, Declarations of Virtue and the Declarations of Innocence, the Book of Khun-Anup is also critically engaged as a central articulation of the Maatian ideal.

Maatian ontology was posed as an ontology of human possibility and was discussed in terms of its fundamental themes of: the potentiality and power of being; the orderedness of being; the continuity of being; the essential goodness of being and the eternalness of being. These themes were examined to demonstrate the ontological grounding for

Maatian ethics. The discussion of Maatian anthropology included examination of fundamental concepts which had and have profound implications for Maatian ethics. This included the concepts of the divine image of humans; the perfectibility of humans, the teachability of humans, the free will of humans and the sociality of humans.

The discussion of social practice was conducted within the framework of the moral claims and concerns of the Declarations of Innocence. Maatian concepts of "the way," community, tradition, reciprocity, service, human dignity, social justice, relationality-responsibility, character and the moral status of women and the stranger were also critically examined. Moreover, I argued that the hinge on which Maatian social practice turns is the concept of worthiness, *im3ḫ*, and that worthiness is essentially sought before God, others and nature. Although the concepts of worthiness before God and humans are abundant in Maatian ethics, as indicated above, the moral category of worthiness before nature required more conceptual development. To do this, I posed possible grounds for a Maatian environmental ethics in Kemetic concepts of the interrelatedness of existence, stewardship and filial obligation, earth as shared heritage, restoration of the world (serudj) and obligation to future generations.

In conclusion, the moral ideal in ancient Egypt which culminated in the Declarations of Innocence and is found in

the Book of Coming Forth By Day, was presented as rooted in and reflective of the polysemic concept and practice of Maat. In the critical examination of this concept, I have attempted to demonstrate its conceptual elasticity and capability for modern moral discourse. I have also attempted to demonstrate the existence and developmental thrust of a contemporary Maatian ethical tradition. I have written this work in that tradition, conceiving the ancient texts as a tradition texts which, while offering permanent and ancient points of departure for philosophic and ethical reflection, do not require one or the same interpretation throughout time. On the contrary, I have approached the texts as revealing a tradition which is open-textured, requiring constant reinterpretation for vitality and ongoing fruitfulness in both philosophic quests and social practice. In fact, a fundamental assumption which informed this project is that an interpreter of a tradition text contributes to building the tradition by his/her very interpretation. In a word, the attempt has been both one of transmission and interpretation of the Maatian ethical tradition. It is thus a project in which the tradition is not simply seen as a process or precondition in which one enters simply as recipient, but also as ongoing project of one's own efforts to understand and participate in it. Such has been the underlying assumption of this work and its thrust to offer a simultaneous contribution to the reconstruction of an

ancient ethical tradition and the development of a distinctive contemporary Maatian ethical discourse which builds on and expands that tradition.

The governing interest throughout this work was to measure the capacity of the Maatian tradition to inspire and sustain ethical philosophical reflection and engage in and contribute to modern moral discourse. My conclusion is that Maat is an ancient moral tradition which is indeed a rich resource for philosophic reflection and modern moral discourse. I end this project of the recovery and reconstruction of Maat in the spirit of serudj and with a passage from the Book of Coming Forth By Day, saying them with the commitment and humbleness of both scholar and advocate: "I know Maat. It is enduring and complete. I have examined it. And I have rejoiced in examining that which was examined" (Chapter 114).

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